THE END OF MAN

ALBANY J. CHRISTIE

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A. M. D. G.

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A. M. D. G.

THE END OF MAN.

In Four Books.

BY

ALBANY JAMES CHRISTIE,

S.J.

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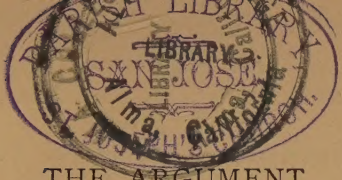

THE ARGUMENT.

THE End of Man is Happiness,—Happiness to be attained through the Right Use of Creatures: their Misuse makes of Man, a Wreck; which may be repaired however on his Repentance.

Hereupon, Man enlists in the Service of the Sovereign of the Universe under the Standard of His Son, by following Whose Humility in the Actions and Sufferings of Life, he gains the Victory over the world and wins His End,—unending Happiness.

ARGUMENT OF BOOK I.

I am a creature of GOD,—intended for Happiness by Glorifying, Reverencing, and Doing the Will of GOD (c. 1): the Instruments with which I am supplied to attain this End are the Creatures that surround me (c. 2). It is possible for me to prefer these Creatures to GOD, and to prefer my will to His Will (c. 3):—if I do, the Fall of the Angels (c. 4),—the Fall of Man (c. 5),—the Wreck of a Lost Soul (c. 6)—warn me of the consequences of my Pride. If I have fallen;—still, if I arraign myself (c. 7), I shall escape the Punishment I have deserved (c. 8), and shall be admitted to a fresh trial. Nothing must discourage me (c. 9).

ARGUMENT OF BOOK II.

I see the SON of GOD going through the villages of the Holy Land, calling men to follow him:—I enlist under His Standard and follow His Example (c. 1). All I see in Him, points to Humility (c. 2—12), and I resolve to welcome Humiliations as Humility's only school (c. 13); I will be in earnest (c. 14),—and aim at its Perfection (c. 15). I trace its Perfection in the Actions of my Master, and choose Him for My Pattern (c. 16—31). I will beware of deception (c. 22).

ARGUMENT OF BOOK III.

I find the profoundest Humiliations and the sublimest Humility in the Sufferings of my Master during His Passion (c. 1—11).

ARGUMENT OF BOOK IV.

The man who has followed His Master and become Humble, lives in the world superior to the world (c. 1—13), and wins endless Happiness in Heaven (c. 14), where he possesses to the full and for ever, the Love of GOD (c. 15).

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THE END OF MAN.

BOOK I. CANTO I.

THE END OF MAN.

The End of Man: the Reign of Christ our Lord:
God's Greater Glory: man's supreme reward:—
Such is my theme, so God attune the chord.

I am not worthy:—yet, the Christian Muse,
Cecilia, could the lifeless organ use
And with her touch celestial strains infuse;

And Thou, Cecilia's Master and her God,
Couldst bid the almond sprout from Aaron's rod;—
Couldst to Thy likeness raise the earthy clod;—

Hear and inspire my song: and if in aught
I seem to speak awry, let every thought
To the sure touchstone of the truth be brought,—

For so, e'en babes inerrancy may share,
Linked, as it is, by God to Peter's Chair
That all who seek the truth may find it there.

The End of Man! And wherefore am I here?
What is the destined end of my career?
Confined to earth or high as Heaven my sphere?

The Spirit bore me to a height sublime
Whence, calmly, I could view the things of time,
And contemplate each city, people, clime.

Nor friendless stood I there;—I soon descried
A form of gracious aspect at my side,
My own dear father, charged my steps to guide.

Right well, Ignatius, did thy martial worth,
Thy genius, grace of form, and noble birth,
Give promise of a proud career on earth.

True Knight wast thou; and thine the warrior's aim;—
Thine, at thy choice, the prize of world-wide fame;—
Thine, with domestic joys, a hero's name:

But thou didst choose the higher, nobler course
Of those who mount the stream to win the source;—
Who storm the willing gates of Heaven by force.

What though unworthy, I am still thy child;
Be thou my teacher, lest, by sin beguiled,
My stammering rhymes with falsehood be defiled.

Pray that God's holy Unction may inspire
The faltering chords of my untempered lyre:—
Let them not jar with Heaven's harmonious choir.

My father heard: the praise be his alone:
The truths I pen his teaching hath made known;
All that is weak and worthless is my own.

He blessed me first: thenceforth with eager gaze
I marked the varied and diverging ways
Of men and women in earth's tangled maze.

As when beneath hot summer's fervid glare
The honey-laden travellers home repair,
And to their hive the golden treasures bear;—

Should one, who scantly of their instincts knew,
The restless throng beneath the crystal view,
And with unpractised eye their tracks pursue;—

All would to him seem labour: he alone,
With eye well practised to observe, could own
Which was the worker, which the idle drone:

So, in the chart before me, small and great,
All fondly chose, according to their state,
Some fancied good their hopes to consummate.

Some sought their end in keen pursuit of gold,
Absorbed in self,—with callous hearts and cold;—
And to be rich, their life and honour sold.

Some sought their end in sensual delight,
Pleasures e'en natural shame conceals from sight,
The luscious love-draught drugged with aconite.

Some, witched by honour's glare, with dazzled eyes
Strove, flight by flight, with soaring enterprise
To proud ambition's giddy height to rise.

All these are toys that bind us down to earth,—
A higher meed befits our heavenly birth,
Beyond compare with these, of nobler worth.

Soul is not matter, natural reasons plead,—
For man's ideas mere matter's powers exceed,
And for conception force of spirit need:

Besides, to faith it stands a truth revealed:
Man's soul to dissolution ne'er can yield,—
God's image in pure spirit countersealed.

Wouldst thou then know, indeed, the End of Man?
Ask of his origin whence he began,
And thou shalt find wherewith his end to scan.

His Spring-head was in truth the Power Divine
Of Him Who ever Is, and Whose design
Planned to make earth and Heaven His Glory's shrine;

Whose Providence to Man, His favourite, gave
A body, soon to moulder in the grave,—
A never-dying soul, for aye to save.

Man's end is endless Life: no eye hath seen,
No ear hath heard, no wit, however keen,
The depths hath sounded of that peace serene,—

Revealed to faith, by science unexplored,
Which in the Vision of our God is stored
For all who praise, revere, and serve the Lord.

While then, man bears the pilgrim's part below,
Much it imports the heavenly road to know:—
Ignatius, help thy son the way to show.

CANTO 2.

THE USE OF CREATURES.

God is! and man! but not in solitude
Hath God made man: let the vast round be viewed
And countless creatures thou shalt find, endued

With diverse properties: earth, sea, and sky
Teem with the handiwork of God most High,
Or void of life, or living, soon to die.

Creatures by God for man's behoof were made,—
Man cannot live without these creatures' aid—
And in their use is God by man obeyed.

But creatures may usurp their Maker's place,
And man be ravished by their outward grace,
Like Atalanta in the fatal race.

The moon so weak herself may intervene
Twixt earth and sun, and like a baleful screen,
Cumber the disc and blotch the mighty sheen!

Nay, though the solar shafts the vision daze,
A coin of bronze may intercept the rays,
And quench the burning sun's meridian blaze.

So things eternal yield to things of time;
So things of sight supplant the unseen sublime,
And by their senses men are lured to crime.

Learn then, O man, the creature's use to know,—
Thankful, if joys, in streams of gladness flow,—
Kissing the rod when God dispenses woe.

When thy free-will is left to make its choice,
In creatures helpful to thy soul rejoice,
But shun the rest for all their siren voice.

So far as creatures aid thee, use their aid,
So far as creatures stay, thy love be stayed:
They were for man, not man for creatures made.

Be not solicitous for either one,
For health or sickness, so God's will be done;
Themselves are equipoised to seek or shun.

Be not enamoured of the glint of gold,
Endure with patience hunger, thirst or cold,
So God be thine what time the end is told.

Care not for man's esteem, for human fame,
Shrink not from this world's slights, contempt and shame,
So God and Angels hold thee free from blame.

Wish not a lengthened life of many years,
Nor let untimely death awake thy fears;
Short-lived or long, he's blessed who perseveres.

To that alone thy choice and wishes bend,—
How best in life thou may'st thy journey spend,
How best in death thou may'st thy journey end.

CANTO 3.

MISSING THE END.

Man's end is endless life: no eye hath seen,
No ear hath heard, no wit however keen,
Hath sounded, or can sound, that peace serene,

Revealed to faith, by science unexplored,
Which in the vision of our God is stored
For all who praise, revere, and serve the Lord.

But, granting this, a disputant might ask,
And with a sophist's art his query mask,
"Is man obliged to undertake the task?

"Say, should a man exert the gift divine,—
The power of choosing freely,—and decline
God's largess and eternal life resign:

"What if enamoured of created good,
He, unambitious, cling to creaturehood,
And leave to others the ambrosial food?

"If God be good, doth not each creature here
His goodness share, and, if we hold it dear,
What is it but its Author to revere?

"Or, grant it folly should a man devote
His love to earth, is't sin on earth to dote?
Sin is the beam, mere foolishness a mote.

"Can man reach God? Can God, the Eternal King,
Value the worship puny man can bring,
Or care if man refuse the offering?

"Well Epicurus taught, profoundly wise,
When gazing upwards on the azure skies,
Gods must the worship paid by men despise."

Base sophistry unworthy a reply!
Treason against the Majesty on high,
Forged by the fiend who first conceived a lie!

Nathless, if thou, indeed wouldst comprehend
Their fate who, charmed by creatures, miss their end,
Creation's annals shall their witness lend.

In thine own cause, O man, all prepossest
Thou canst not fairly judge: self-love will wrest
In judging self, the judgment of the best.

No outward signs betray the plague of sin,—
How the wrecked soul is devastate within,—
How crime and hideous loathsomeness are kin!

God judges right; could we His judgments trace
On others passed, of like but nobler race,
Gifted like men with reason, will, and grace,—

If they, by falling short, God's vengeance earn,
We may our fate from their sad history learn,
And in another's woe our own discern.

CANTO 4.

WRECK OF THE ANGELS.

Now to a bolder flight aspires my song,
And, winged to contemplate the Angelic throng,
There needs the eagle's eye and pinion strong.

Angel of God! Cecilia's heavenly friend,
Oh, by that aid which to the glorious end
Thou didst to her, the martyr-bride, extend—

Help her poor client: clear his mortal sight,—
Renew his strength for his adventurous flight;
Direct his pen the mystic truth to write.

Thou too, Ignatius, who hast shown thy son
The strife 'twixt good and ill, in Heaven begun,
Nor ending till probation's course hath run:

Teach him the Angels' overthrow to tell:—
How from their pristine state through pride they fell,—
Hurled down from highest Heaven to lowest Hell.

Or ever years revolved, or time began,
A nobler standard of succession ran,
And æons measured out duration's span.

God called the Angels from the void immense;—
He spoke the word, and on the instant thence
They sprang in beauty, grace, intelligence.

Not as in gardens here on earth below
Flowers charm the sight in tesselated row,
And thousands of one kind in clusters grow,—

Not so the Empyrean hosts: those Spirits blest
Are all of perfect loveliness possessed;—
Each shines with gifts distinct from all the rest.

And if the humblest of the Sons of light
Exceeds imagination's loftiest flight,
What rule shall gauge the burning Seraph's height?

Yet, high o'er Seraph and o'er Cherub there,
Throned in majestic state beyond compare
Sat Lucifer, sublime, supremely fair.

He was the seal of God's resemblance,—wise,—
Perfect in all the gifts that Angels prize;
Admired by all the legions of the skies;

Arrayed in beauty; every precious stone,
Ruby and emerald, sparkled in his zone;
A blaze of brilliants, shone his dazzling throne.

When he from chaos first to being sprang,
And the Trisagion with Michael sang,
What jubilance through Heaven's bright mansions rang!

O happy, happy, happy Morning Star!
Surely no root of bitterness can mar
Such blissful being with discordant jar!

Ah! there are mysteries in God, that daze
E'en Angels' vision—and while Angels gaze
Only humility sustains the blaze.

One attribute in God outshines the rest,
By Spirits that are godlike loved the best,
And of true loyalty unerring test.

God's Power and Love, both infinite, are peers:
His Power evoked from nought the boundless spheres,
His Love made God Himself acquaint with tears.

A mother,—sure her love all love outvies,—
Herself forgetting, every need descries
Of her sick babe, and every want supplies:

And, though compared with God's, alike in name,
A mother's love is but a painted flame,
The mode of showing both is aye the same :

The Son, to prove His Love, resigns His crown,—
Incurs for man His Heavenly Father's frown,—
And on the shameful Rood His Life lays down.

He would the treasures of His Love exhaust,—
Stoop to the lowest depth, to save the lost ;—
God is made Man, for man a holocaust.

'Twas now probation of free-will began
When through the Angelic hosts the mandate ran :
"Ye Sons of God, adore the Son of Man !"

Angels so highly dowered needs must know
That when the Lord is pleased His Will to show,
E'en highest Seraphs prompt submission owe.

Say, it seemed strange for Angels to adore
One, Who a form, to theirs inferior, bore,
Still, God, they knew, is just : what needs there more ?

To each commandment by God's Wisdom planned
Is blind obedience due from every band
Of those blest Spirits who around Him stand.

So, when the mystic words are uttered o'er
The bread,—we hear the mandate as of yore :
"Ye sons of men, the Son of Man adore !"

Touchstone that surely tests the humble soul :—
Fatal to that fell pride that spurns control :—
Disparting those who win or miss the goal.

Alas for Lucifer ! Lost, lost through pride !
Woe to the legions who God's wrath defied !
E'en Michael paled at their dread suicide.

The scornful Angel, gazing on the Child,
That looked so weak, was racked with passion wild,
And impotent with rage God's Word reviled.

"By us, ye gods," he cried, to madness driven,
"Shall worship to a thing of flesh be given?
Sooner let Heaven's strong vault in twain be riven!"

And Michael too the Eternal's bidding heard;
No sooner uttered was Jehovah's word,
But his prompt act God's sovereign right averred.

He railed not; but rebuked the apostate horde;—
"Ah! Be thou, chidden, Satan, of the Lord!
Who is as God?" and lovingly adored.

Gabriel obeyed, and won the future grace
To announce how Mary's Seed should sin efface,
How Truth and Mercy, reconciled, embrace.

And Raphael too stood forth, the chief of seven,
And, proof against revolt's contagious leaven,
A loyal vassal, praised the Lord of Heaven.

Thousands of thousands true as heretofore,
Ten thousand times a hundred thousand more,
Ancient of days, Thy Son made Man, adore.

The apostate Lucifer, with desperate throe,
No longer Godlike, but God's reckless foe,
Conceived and gendered never-ending woe.

Woe for the thousands who in deadly hate,
Against God's First-born Son confederate,
Share the lost Seraph's miserable fate.

And he, Arch-fiend, who taught them to rebel,
Once foremost, Heaven's glad harmonies to swell,
Sinks down to ply the drudgery of Hell.

Since, then, God judges right, and we can trace
His verdict passed on Heaven's apostate race
Gifted, like us, with reason, will, and grace;

Since Angels through revolt God's vengeance earn,
From their dread wreck we may our peril learn,
And, in another's woe our own discern.

If God on Angels laid in wrath His Hand,—
Who dared through pride against His Will to band,—
Say, how shall man, prevaricating, stand?

Jesus, my Lord and God, Thine anguished brow
Thorn-crowned upon the Cross, I see Thee bow,—
Thee, my Creator: how is it that Thou

Hast stooped so low as to resign Thy Throne,—
To make our manhood and its woes Thine own,—
And die man's death, forsaken and alone?

Ah! Thou hast died for me and for my sin!
And now, abashed, my Jesus, I begin
To ponder what Thou art, what I have been.

What have I done for Jesus hitherto?
What is there now for Jesus' sake I do?
How shall I henceforth prove to Jesus true?

In dust and ashes at Thy Feet I bow,
Christ Crucified is all my solace now:
Ah! Gracious Lord, what else but Love art Thou?

When from my wretched self I turn my eyes
To Jesus' Cross, and see how Jesus dies,
My hard heart melts: my tongue for mercy cries:

O Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! heal my soul,—
All that rebels in me by grace control
And in Thy tender Mercy make me whole.

CANTO 5.

WRECK OF THE WORLD.

The heavens declare how Angel myriads, driven
By reckless pride, against God's Will have striven,
And missed their end,—too proud to be forgiven!

See them refuse obedience and rebel
Against their Lord and God: see how they fell
Hurled down from highest Heaven to lowest Hell!

Since, then, our God spared not the Angelic band,—
The first and noblest creatures of His Hand,—
Say, how shall man, prevaricating, stand?

Let earth now bear her witness. Cast thy mind
On bygone ages, when the glowing rind
Cooled into solid mass to lodge mankind.

At first the molten round, through ether hurled,
Crested with billows by the steam-blast curled,
Impetuous, on its central axis whirled,

A ball of fire: then hardening more and more,
The surface by degrees is crusted o'er,—
A continent, without or sea or shore.

Nor long remains the pristine shell entire;
Nature's conflicting energies conspire
And shatter it, by vacuum and fire.

The surface cooled and rent, the aqueous steam
Is turned to water, and the torrents stream,
Filling the hollows from the parts supreme.

Next by detrition of each igneous block,
Shattered and pulverized by shock on shock,
Grew, neath the waves, earth's skeleton of rock.

Thus, in due course of time, earth, sea, and air
Fitly proportioned by the Almighty's care,
The fabric of the world among them share.

Nor long unfertile :—here, the humid fens
Flush green with mosses ;—there, gaunt specimens
Of towering fern-trees line the darkling glens ;—

And all for man ! Stem, root, and frond and cone
At rivers' mouths in confluent masses thrown,
Then by incumbent strata pressed to stone,

Serve now with genial warmth man's hearth to cheer,
Light up his nights with noon-day brightness clear,
And speed his iron courser's winged career.

Earth teems with herbs,—with shrubs of varied form,—
Sweet flowers where-round the bees industrious swarm,
And gnarled oaks, defiant of the storm.

For man, God made the sun, to give him light,—
For man, God made the moon, to rule the night,—
The stars of heaven to guide his helm aright.

For man, life throngs the caverns of the deep,
Portentous lizards through the marshes creep,
And high in air the bat-winged monsters sweep.

God made four-footed beasts on land to stray,
Races and kinds that long have passed away,
And left but footprints in the plastic clay,

Or shattered frames of once colossal bone
Found petrified in each terrestrial zone,
Of mammoth, megathere, and mastodon.

And gentler beasts were made for man's behoof,
To dwell with him domestic, 'neath his roof,
Furnish his table, or supply the woof.

Nor lacked there harmony of sound; along
The shady groves carolled the feathered throng
And filled the vault of Heaven with sweet song.

The earth was carpeted with blossoms fair,
Scented with fragrant perfume; all was there
A father's love could for his child prepare.

When God had thus for man the earth arrayed,
He fashioned man: the noblest work essayed
Of earthly things, in God's own image made;—

Raised to His likeness by the gift of grace,
Destined, in guerdon for the well-run race,
To gaze on his Creator, face to face.

At first, or e'er the æons had begun,
When nought else was, the Father and the Son
And Holy Ghost consorted, Three in One:—

And God saw man, whom He created good,
How all alone, companionless, he stood,
And, in compassion, from the neighbourhood

Of that rich spring of love, the human heart,
He drew man's true but fairer counterpart,
Woman, the paragon of heavenly art;

For Woman, surely, in our Lady seen,
Reigns sov'reign o'er all creature-hood, I ween,
In nature, grace, and glory, peerless Queen.

And man was happy now: the soil he trod
Bore juicy grapes and sweet charouba pod;
Eve was his helpmate, and his Father, God.

It was the wish of God that joys so pure
Should, as man's heritage, from loss secure
E'en to the end of time unchanged endure.

So we and all men else, in every age,
Like our first parents, had been just and sage,
With perfect happiness our appanage.

Man would love man as brother loves his brother,
Brethren of God-made-Man, sons of His Mother,
All holding dear God's likeness in each other.

The wolf would with the playful lambkin sport,
The spotted leopard with the kid consort,
The weanling's hand the basilisk would court:

No hurt should be on earth, destruction none;—
All one in God, and with each other one;—
One happy fellowship through God the Son.

But when rejoicing in such promise fair
We with th' ideal, the world we see, compare,
What meets our startled gaze? A wreck is there!

Alas! alas! alas! Look round and see:
Our parents ate of the forbidden tree,
And we are slaves whom God created free.

The rich are full of bread and full of pride,
The poor are starving at the rich man's side,
Their kinship and their brotherhood denied.

God's Church is there to save the drowning wretch,
God's Priests are there the saving hand to stretch,
God's Sacraments, God's grace from Heaven to fetch.

But men are fools and care not to be wise;—
But men are knaves, and honest thrift despise;
All are bewitched with sophistries and lies.

And whence these ruins that the soul appal?
Whence, from so happy state, so dismal fall?
One sin of disobedience caused it all.

A sin that seemeth small became the seed
Of future wars and lust and carking greed,
Of direst crime in thought and word and deed.

Yea! seemeth small: but when the Great Supreme,
To prove true loyalty's untainted stream,
Chooseth some test, however small it seem,

Then doth a character such trifle bear
As may in justice' balance stand compare
With gravest proofs, and their importance share.

Nay, more! Does God a sign of fealty ask
To try man's heart, the easier the task,
Revolt the greater malice would unmask.

If man a crown on cheapest terms may win—
Terms that assay the dubious ore within—
To pluck an apple may be deadly sin.

If crime through one such sin the earth o'erflows;—
If earth now travails with distressful throes,
Sad heritage of sin-begotten woes:

If towns and country with corruption reek,
If, e'en among the poor, 'tis far to seek
For innocence: if icy winds and bleak

Have froze the world through sin,—one sin,—but one:
Then, if my soul in sin has riot run,
What of this soul of mine? Undone! Undone

No outward signs betray the plague of sin,—
How the wrecked soul is devastate within,
How crime and hideous loathsomeness are kin.

God judges right: when we His judgments trace
Passed on the Parents of the human race,
And see their fallen offspring lost to grace,

We know sin's guilt must be in us the same:
Right must like judgments 'gainst like crimes proclaim:
So let us hang our heads for very shame.

Ah! God is Love! Mankind no sooner lost,
But Thou wilt find a cure, whate'er it cost:
No sacrifice could Love like Thine exhaust!

Straightway Thy Love invented a reprieve;
A Woman, made immaculate like Eve,
Of God the Holy Spirit shall conceive:

And in the Eternal Counsels 'tis decreed,—
Henceforth the Woman and the Woman's Seed
Shall crush the Serpent's head, and man be freed.

Lo! Calvary! and I am dull, nor care
For all my Maker agonises there,
Mourning in accents sounding like despair,—

Despair of man's repentance: there He lies
On the hard Wood, "My God, My God," He cries,
"Oh, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and dies.

O hearts of stone, more senseless than the block
Of hardest granite from the Nubian rock,
How can ye jeer and wag the head and mock?

Nay, O my soul, God, Who is just and true,
Charged not the guilt on Gentile or on Jew;—
My sin it was, my Lord and Master slew!

My sin it was that swung the scourge and rod:
My sin that underfoot my Saviour trod,
My sin that shed in streams the Blood of God.

Jesus, my Lord and God, Thine anguished brow
Thorn-crowned upon the Cross, I see Thee bow,
Thee, my Creator: how is it that Thou

Hast stooped so low as to resign Thy Throne,—
To make our manhood and its woes Thine own,—
And die man's death, forsaken and alone?

Ah! Thou hast died for me and for my sin!
And now, abashed, my Jesus, I begin
To ponder what Thou art, what I have been.

What have I done for Jesus hitherto?
What is there now for Jesus' sake I do?
How shall I henceforth prove to Jesus true?

In dust and ashes at Thy Feet I bow,
Christ Crucified is all my solace now:
Ah! Gracious Lord, what else but Love art Thou?

When from my wretched self I turn my eyes
To Jesus' Cross, and see how Jesus dies,
My hard heart melts: my tongue for mercy cries.

O Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! heal my soul,—
All that rebels in me by grace control
And in Thy tender Mercy make me whole.

CANTO 6.

THE WRECKED SOUL.

Angels have lost through sin their thrones on high;
Our great First Parents miss their end and die;
Turn now thy gaze to where the hapless lie,

And see there some lost soul, a soul like thine,
Designed by Wisdom, Power, and Love Divine,
Among the Saints in endless light to shine.

Within the compass of a single day
(So do the records of man's death-roll say),
Some hundred thousand souls are swept away.

Review the myriads of that living host;—
Think'st thou that all have won the blissful coast?—
Ah! put thy question to some shipwrecked ghost,

Or, since a shipwrecked soul to woe up-given,
To dire and dour remorse by conscience driven,
Would heed thee not, all bonds of kindness riven:

Ask his once Guardian Angel to declare
What evil chance or choice has brought him there,
By God forsaken,—victim of despair;

And he will tell thee that he missed his end:—
God's will had been that he should live God's friend,
And in due time to God's Right Hand ascend:—

Look now! Behold him now,—death's river crossed,
By fiery passion, rage, and anguish tossed,
Lost to himself and God: for ever lost!

We at his christening heard his sponsors pray,
That born anew through water's mystic spray,
The traces of the fall might pass away.

He was a winsome child;—his only care
Was with his playmates guileless joys to share;
He was a boy in soul and body fair:

His loving mother watched him as he grew,
Taught him to lisp his prayers and love them too,
To fly from evil and be frank and true.

Frequent his father's wise experience gave
Counsel to guide him life-long to the grave,
Training his soul the scoffer's taunts to brave.

Oh, how I watched him as he grew apace,
Oh, how I noted each advance in grace,
Oh, how I prayed that he might win the race!

Gentle he was, and quick to pity stirred,
Brave for the right and constant to his word,
God's Greater Glory to all else preferred:

I deemed it certain that a soul so pure
Would to the hour of death unstained endure,—
Free from offence, in God's fast love secure.

Look now! Behold him, death's dark river crossed,
With storm of passion, rage, and anguish tossed,
Lost to himself and God,—for ever lost!

What was it marred the lineaments divine?
What has so disappointed God's design?
One sin! one deadly sin! one sin like mine!

He knew not what sin was: but, on a time,
Read a lewd story of a shameful crime,
By some vile poetaster set to rhyme,

And nature stirred within; and he would know
What kind of thing sin is:—like poison slow
The lust of knowing spun the web of woe:

And so he read and learned, and learned and thought,
And each new thinking new temptation brought,
And in the fancy strange conceptions wrought.

Oh, how I trembled for my foster child!
Others I knew, from innocence beguiled,
To utter ruin whirled by passions wild.

Long was the conflict in my poor child's heart;
Subtle the pleadings against conscience' smart;
Countless the waverings to either part.

He looked and longed, and conscience cried within
Take heed! take heed! thou knowest 'tis deadly sin:
And deadly sin to endless death is kin.

Wilt thou thy fealty to thy God deny?
Wilt thou rebel against the Lord most High?
Wilt thou the justice of thy God defy?

Wilt thou thy conscience drug to fatal sleep?
Behold the pit of Hell! How dark! how deep!
With eyes wide open wilt thou take the leap?

Closer and closer still the brink he nears;
Comrades deride with scoffs his girlish fears:
One thought arrests him still:—his mother's tears.

"Once, only once, the luscious draught I'll drain!
Once bathe in rapture!—once,—and then refrain!"
He took the plunge,—and sank,—nor rose again.

Lost! and no tears can now the past retrieve;
Lost, and for ever! Lost without reprieve!
I cannot pray for him; I can but grieve.

He found sad welcome in the abyss below;—
The demons 'mid the flames that round him glow,
Jeer him and laugh to scorn his helpless woe.

Himself in evil fixed, from good averse,
Curseth his mother and himself: ah! worse,
Blasphemes the God Who made him, with a curse.

A wreck through sin! one sin, and only one!
And I mayhap in sin have riot run;
What of this soul of mine? Undone! undone!

No outward signs betray the plague of sin,
How the wrecked soul is devastate within,
How crime and hideous loathsomeness are kin.

God judges right; when we His judgments trace,
Passed on a sinner of the human race,
And see a fellow-creature lost to grace:

We know sin's guilt must be in us the same:
Right must like judgments 'gainst like crimes proclaim;
So let us hang our heads for very shame.

He sinned but once, what sins have I to own?
One or one thousand? 'Tis to me unknown,
I cannot count them up! God knows, alone.

God has been patient: my each deadly sin
Provoked His Justice, but He reined it in;
Bore till worn out,—then would again begin.

Each time He bore with me, another debt
I owed Him for His patient love; and yet
Each pardoned sin did but new sins beget.

And so the malice was increased the more
By the ingratitude I now deplore;—
Sins guilt exaggerated o'er and o'er!

Sin has its measure: by the Almighty led
Abram roamed south-wards, from the Jordan's head,
And nomad-like his flocks and cattle fed:

God barred the land's possession for a time
Because, though great, the Amorrhæans' crime
Up to the chalice' brim had yet to climb.

Sin has its measure: one grave sin may fill
The cup of one man and with justice; still
God may forbear in mercy at His will,

E'en to the millionth! Son of man, beware;
Thou know'st not whether there be room to spare:
'Twere madness then but one more sin to dare.

Take heed! Take heed! If thou but sin once more,
Thou mayst accomplish the predestined score;
Justice may claim its rights,—and all is o'er!

Oh, with what patience hast Thou borne with me:
I might have perished: but I still am free,—
Free to be saved and find my rest in Thee!

Look on the Features of Thine only Son;
His Cross redeemed me when I was undone;—
His Blood, my ransom, hath my pardon won.

My sin it was that swung the scourge and rod,
My sin that underfoot my Saviour trod,
My sin that shed in streams the Blood of God.

Jesus, my Lord and God, Thine anguished brow
Thorn-crowned upon the Cross, I see Thee bow,
Thee, my Creator: how is it that Thou

Hast stooped so low as to resign Thy Throne,—
To make our manhood and its woes Thine own,—
And die man's death, forsaken and alone?

Ah! Thou hast died for me and for my sin!
And now, abashed, my Jesus, I begin
To ponder what Thou art, what I have been.

What have I done for Jesus hitherto?
What is there now for Jesus' sake I do?
How shall I henceforth prove to Jesus true?

In dust and ashes at Thy feet I bow,
Christ Crucified is all my solace now:
Ah! Gracious Lord, what else but Love art Thou?

When from my wretched self I turn my eyes
To Jesus' Cross, and see how Jesus dies,
My hard heart melts: my tongue for mercy cries.

O Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! heal my soul,—
All that rebels in me by grace control
And in Thy tender Mercy make me whole.

CANTO 7.

SELF-ARRAIGNMENT.

The Angels, by their wreck, the heavens appal;
The world lies wrecked through our First Parents' fall;
A shipwrecked soul despairs in endless thrall.

Wouldst thou the power of a cause discern?
To its effects thy thoughts attentive turn,
And thou from them its energy shalt learn.

Men speak of tempests in the Euxine Sea,
When gallant ships with all their panoply
Were dashed to pieces on the fatal lee:

Of oaken hull, strong spar, and sturdy mast,
Shattered and splintered by the cyclone's blast,
No yard-length plank was on the seaboard cast.

Sin's wreck,—God's union with His creature riven,—
Tells the fell power of sin,—sin unforgiven,—
Tells me my doom, if I go hence unshriven.

Therefore, O God, bowed down with contrite shame,
I, for Thy dear Son's sake, Thy pity claim;
True, I have sinned, but He assumes the blame.

I will arraign myself, and in that day
When Satan, man's accuser, seeks his prey,
Thou shalt the roaring lion keep at bay.

For 'tis the gracious law in God's domain,
Who judge themselves shall not be judged again,
Nor shall the foe the self-accused arraign.

Such lot be mine! Moved by contrition's smart,
Against myself I'll act the Judge's part
And probe the deep recesses of my heart.

Grant me of Thy dear love the keenest sense;
Grant me to know the depth of my offence;
Grant me the tears of contrite penitence.

Beyond all thought is God supremely great,
Sublimest Angels, in their loftiest state,
In His dread Presence bend annihilate;

And if the meanness of the culprit swell
The measure of the crime, what tongue can tell
How great must be my guilt, if I rebel!

Do I but gauge aright my little worth,—
A unit 'mid the millions o'er the earth,
I pass unnoticed in its ample girth.

The millions of mankind, how few are they
Contrasted with the Sons of endless day,
The Saints' and Angels' numberless array?

Then God's High Majesty to nothing brings
All Saints and Angels,—all created things,
All human countings and imaginings.

Oh, what am I, poor worm, that I should dare
The rights of God with creatures' claims to share,
And with God's worth a creature's worth compare?

And if I trace the havoc sin has wrought,—
My soul a wreck to dire confusion brought,—
I sink to less than nothing,—I am naught!

Worms' food my body in the day supreme,
My soul impervious to true Wisdom's beam,—
A tainted fount whence poisoned waters stream.

And I, this less than atomy,—sin's slave,—
Have turned against my God the gifts He gave,—
And dared His great Omnipotence to brave.

I, with an intellect contract, confined,
To truths of highest import dull and blind,
Have dared to challenge God's Omniscient mind.

I, weak and froward, fickle child of dust,
Though made for justice, have betrayed my trust,—
Have done despite to Him Whose Name is Just.

I, who, forgetful of man's brotherhood,
Resent a friend's unkindness, have withstood
My loving God, the infinitely Good.

O, all ye Creatures of my outraged God,
While, 'neath my feet, His sacred Law I trod,
How have ye held your hand and stayed the rod?

Nor only once, but seventy times and more,
How great soe'er, though infinite, the score,
Still have ye borne with me; aye, o'er and o'er!

Ye Angels, swift avengers of the Lord,
Have proved my guardians,—my reprieve implored,—
And turned aside the edge of Justice' sword.

Me, Saints of God, can ye for client own?
Can ye ingratitude like mine condone,
And plead a cause like mine before the Throne?

Ye skies, 'thwart which God's thunderbolts are driven,
Forged amid darkling clouds by lightning riven,
To me the freshening dews of life have given.

Thou blazing orb of day, thou dazzling Sun,
With power man's brain with maddening stroke to stun,
For my behoof thy daily course hast run.

The Moon, the Stars, earth, water, air, and fire,
Birds, beasts, and fishes, all alike conspire,
To work my weal in one harmonious choir.

'Tis God hath charged Saints, Angels, Creatures, all,
To guard me from the ills that might befall,
And e'er too late my soul to penance call.

Towards me, my God, what patience hast Thou shown,—
How hast Thou made Thy sweet compassion known,—
Thy Goodness I confess; my guilt I own!

Look on the Features of Thine only Son;—
His Cross redeemed me when I was undone!
His Blood, my ransom, hath my pardon won.

My sin it was that swung the scourge and rod:—
My sin that underfoot my Saviour trod:
My sin that shed in streams the Blood of God.

Jesus, my Lord and God, Thine anguished brow
Thorn-crowned upon the Cross, I see Thee bow,
Thee, my Creator: how is it that Thou

Hast stooped so low as to resign Thy Throne,—
To make our manhood and its woes Thine own,—
And die man's death, forsaken and alone?

Ah! Thou hast died for me and for my sin!
And now, abashed, my Jesus, I begin
To ponder what Thou art, what I have been.

What have I done for Jesus hitherto?
What is there now for Jesus' sake I do?
How shall I henceforth prove to Jesus true?

In dust and ashes at Thy Feet I bow,
Christ Crucified is all my solace now:
Ah! Gracious Lord, what else but Love art Thou?

When from my wretched self I turn my eyes
To Jesus' Cross, and see how Jesus dies,
My hard heart melts: my tongue for mercy cries.

O Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! heal my soul,—
All that rebels in me by grace control
And in Thy tender Mercy make me whole.

Soul of Christ, do Thou sanctify my soul;
Body of Christ, Thy virtue make me whole;
And Blood of Christ, my passions' thirst control:

Cleanse, Water from Christ's Side, my heart from stain:
Passion of Christ, support me in my pain:
Let me not call on Thee, dear Lord, in vain.

Within Thy Sacred Wounds Thy servant hide:
Let nothing ever part me from Thy Side:
Defend me from the foe's malignant pride.

Call me what time my passing bell shall toll,
And bid me, with Thy Saints, reach Thee my goal,
To praise Thee while for aye the ages roll.

CANTO 8.

THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN.

God has indeed been patient! long ago,
Had not His tender mercy fenced the blow,
I had been sentenced to the realms of woe.

Still can the wiles of sin my soul amuse?
Still can my heart the call of grace refuse?
Still can I dare God's patience to abuse?

If so, then let the fear of Hell appal
My senseless heart; let fright and terror call,—
Call to quick penance,—ere the tree shall fall:

For, as the tree shall fall, the tree shall lie,
Or South or North: and if it fall awry
Thenceforth all hopes of grace and mercy die.

The tenderest Heart e'er throbbed in human breast,
The kindest Lips e'er human thought expressed,
Have told us of the reprobate's unrest;

How sin at last must e'en God's patience tire
And light the inextinguishable fire,—
The meed of untamed wrath or lewd desire:—

The doom of such as reckless quit the source
Of grace and good and end in sin their course,
Gnawed by the undying worm of dour remorse.

God hath in love revealed the endless woe;
As a fond mother, pointing where below
At the cliff's base the ocean's waters flow,

Doth to the giddy brink her darling bear,
Show the gaunt precipice beneath and scare
Her heedless little one from venturing there.

If I then tempted and by passion blind
Fail my good God with love to bear in mind,
Let fear at least my fickle nature bind:—

Fear of the terrors of the Judgment Day;—
Fear of the great Tribunal's dread array;—
Fear of the hopeless reprobate's dismay.

In presence of my sins I stand aghast:
Teach me to know their malice in the past,
And knowing, hate them long as life shall last.

Teach me to know, and knowing, make me hate
My present sin-wrought waywardness of state:—
Unapt to good, unstrung and enervate.

Teach me to know, and knowing more and more
The wiles that have bewitched me heretofore,
Make me all pride and greed and lust abhor.

Teach me to shun my own by others' woe,
That sad, sad misery in Hell below,
Which they who love Thee not, must undergo.

Some counted just by men but steeped in pride,
Presumptuous, on their shallow wits relied;
Would not believe, and unbelieving died.

Others, correct in faith, in life depraved,
Drowned in the pleasures by their passions craved,
Stifled their conscience and God's threat'nings braved.

Of these who now, despairing and forlorn,
In anguish writhe, the butt of endless scorn,
Some met their doom or ever Christ was born:

Some, whilst He deigned as Man with men to dwell,
And sowed the word of truth in Israel,
Though He was nigh to save, sin's bond-slaves fell.

Some, since in glory He began to reign,
His arts of mercy lavished all in vain,
Chose for their lot the heritage of pain.

Blessed be God! He willed not I should die
And find my doom with these; He still is nigh
And His Ear open to my contrite sigh.

God is a God of tenderness, I trow!
How great His Love, His Saints and Angels know!—
What can I do in turn my love to show?

Jesus, my Lord and God, Thine anguished brow
Thorn-crowned upon the Cross, I see Thee bow,—
Thee, my Creator: how is it that Thou

Hast stooped so low as to resign Thy Throne,—
To make our manhood and its woes Thine own,—
And die man's death, forsaken and alone?

Ah! Thou hast died for me and for my sin!
And now, abashed, my Jesus, I begin
To ponder what Thou art, what I have been.

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To Jesus' Cross, and see how Jesus dies,
My hard heart melts: my tongue for mercy cries.

O Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! heal my soul,—
All that rebels in me by grace control
And in Thy tender Mercy make me whole.

Soul of Christ, do Thou sanctify my soul;
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And Blood of Christ, my passions' thirst control:

Cleanse, Water from Christ's Side, my heart from stain:
Passion of Christ, support me in my pain:
Let me not call on Thee, dear Lord, in vain.

Within Thy Sacred Wounds Thy servant hide:
Let nothing ever part me from Thy Side:
Defend me from the foe's malignant pride.

Call me what time my passing bell shall toll,
And bid me, with Thy Saints, reach Thee my goal,
To praise Thee while for aye the ages roll.

CANTO 9.

DESOLATION.

A grief there is, past nature's strength to endure,—
Or be the sufferer novice or mature,—
Wherefrom no child of Adam is secure.

This is the grief of desolation,—good
To brace the soul to Christian hardihood,
And bid it suffer as Christ's liege-man should.

'Tis mostly true, that he who walks aright
And bears him bravely in life's daily fight,
Christ's yoke finds easy and His burden light;

How weak soever in himself and frail,
The tempter's arrows disappointed fail
To pierce the Christian warrior's close-knit mail.

But life from trial free gives little scope
With Satan's malice manfully to cope;—
To practise humble faith or patient hope.

Therefore that men may apprehend the laws
Of joy and sadness, God at times withdraws
The sweets of grace, true consolation's cause,

And leaves the substance only; then amain
Will Lucifer, alert, each fibre strain
By force or fraud to win man back again.

Then the poor soul is darkened o'er with cloud;
Then do the hungry passions cry aloud;
Then do desponding thoughts the fancy crowd.

The soul lies sad, disconsolate, and prone,
As all forsaken, as left all alone; [flown.
Hope well-nigh quenched;—e'en Faith itself seems

And in all this,—so far,—may be no guilt;
There may be fearful danger, an thou wilt,
Testing the base whereon thy faith is built:

'Tis in such case, the man who knows not prayer,
In pleasure's giddy vortex drowns his care,
Or drains the cup to stifle his despair,—

Or e'en, with gloomy spleen and maddened brain,
Succumbs to irksome sadness' overstrain,
And, suicidal, snaps life's thread in twain.

Not so the meek and humble; well they know
It is the Hand of God that lays them low,
And that for wisest ends He treats them so.

As a wise father doth his son chastise
For actual faults, so God with penance plies
His froward children but to make them wise;

As a fond mother,—ere its strength be grown—
Teaches her child, unstayed, to walk alone,
God hides Himself to make our weakness known;

Or as Creator, with design foreplanned,
He from His creature, man, withdraws His Hand,
That man man's nothingness may understand.

Fear if thou wilt, but faint not, child of God,—
In love, not wrath, thy Maker wields the rod:—
The feet of Justice are with Mercy shod.

Thou wouldst be like thy Lord? Retrace His Life,
And thou shalt find it spent in ceaseless strife,
With griefs and pains and desolation rife.

God wills to teach thee patience: meekly bear
The load that weighs thee down: thy soul prepare,—
Nor for one moment yield thee to despair.

Say, the Sun's disc with clouds is darkly crossed,—
'Tis for brief season; and, when all seems lost,
Bright skies again shall cheer the tempest-tossed.

Often ere now, as in capricious mood
Of changeful season, clement now, now rude,
Thou hast found sorrows on thy joys intrude.

If then thou'rt now in trouble, thou canst tell
What will befall by what erewhile befell:—
The clouds will pass: and all again be well.

In consolation thou wilt ne'er presume;—
To-day, fair sunshine may the skies illume,
The flowers may lose to-morrow their perfume.

Alike, be equable in weal or woe,
Bless God, with thankful heart, in gladness' flow,
Bless God, with patience, when the ebb runs low.

The harder pressed, the nearer brought to bay,
Still, in the battle, a bold front display,
And never fear but thou shalt win the day.

Satan is craven ever, and in fight,—
Resisted face to face, he takes to flight,—
Baffled and foiled by merest neophyte.

But if thou wince, so surely as the shrew
Makes her faint-hearted spouse his weakness rue,
Satan o'er thee will act the tyrant too.

As the vile wretch who would his friend betray
And the chaste honour of his wife essay,
Slinks like a poltroon, when unmasked, away ;

Satan would have thee in thy breast conceal
The sore, which wouldst thou to God's priest reveal,
One word of ghostly charity might heal.

Alert, keep watch and ward against surprise,
Guard thy heart's fortress well ; the foe espies
Each weaker point, and there his engines plies.

He with malicious cunning prowls around ;—
Do thou his craft and artifices sound,
Nor let one spot be unprotected found.

So shall all stratagems of evil fail ;—
So shalt thou, child of God most High, prevail ;
Angels shall greet thee and thy triumph hail.

END OF BOOK I.

BOOK II. CANTO I.

THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

When back the curtain of the night is drawn
In the far East the pearl-bespangled dawn
Reveals the glistening brook and verdant lawn,—

Lights up the landscape, wakes the joyous birds,
Rouses to fertile toil the lowing herds,
And buoys man's earth-bound spirit heavenwards.

So, when we cease with saddened thought to muse
The upas-blight of sin's empoisoned dews,—
Again we breathe and trace the sun-lit hues

Of grace and life! Cecilia, Virgin Bride!
Pray for thy client, lest some secret pride
May from his ken the heavenly pathway hide

And spoil his quarry! for, henceforth, his song
Would brace the soul of man with purpose strong
As towards its destined goal it climbs along.

Cease to do evil!—henceforth quit thee well!
Yet cast one glance behind on that drear fell
Which thou hast crossed and looks so terrible;

On those dark mountains and that painful road
Which galled thy feet till Christ His grace bestowed
And freed thy sin-bound spirit from its load.

Thank God, the sinner's free!—the slave, that erst
Lift up his eyes towards Heaven nor could nor durst,
Finds at the touch of Christ his fetters burst,—

And thus he cries: "O Lord, Thine Ear incline,
And hear my prayer: I seek no Will but Thine:
What wilt Thou have me do? Be Thy Will mine!"

So prays the rescued sinner: and, in turn,
The Voice Divine: "My son, if thou wouldst learn
The way of peace, and God's true Will discern,

"Give ear to a similitude: a King,
Whose brows were circled with the golden ring
By gift Divine, was charged by Heaven to bring

"The world of infidels beneath his sway;—
And so he summoneth without delay
All Christian lords and peoples: they obey,

"And, gathered by the sound of trumpet's clang,
They haste to hear their suzerain's harangue,
And on his words in listening silence hang.

"And thus he spoke: 'Tis God, Who bids me tell
You, my liege subjects, whom I love so well,
How we must war against the infidel.

"'So many provinces in darkness lie,—
So many nations know not the Most High,—
So many millions, unbelieving die.

"'God would bring grace to all,—and with your aid,
Just terms on either side and loyal made,
He bids me enterprise the Grand Crusade.

"'I will be with you and your hardships share;—
For you and me shall be one equal care,—
The same our lodging and alike our fare:

"'We will in turn the soldier's duties take;—
Sleep in our turn, in turn our slumbers break;
Leader and men, like toils shall comrades make.

"'The victory's certain: even now for them
Who share my toils, with many a sparkling gem
There is prepared a princely diadem.'"

Thus home the motives for the warfare driven,—
Canst doubt the answer to their suzerain given?
Would not the welkin with acclaim be riven?

Who would not interrupt his easy life,—
Quit for a space his children, hearth, and wife,
To exploit his prowess in the glorious strife?

And some, perchance, before their prince's eyes,
Beyond the rest their zeal would signalize,
And win a nobler still and higher prize.

Such men, with lavish hands and hearts, would pour
Into their King's exchequer all their store:
Would sacrifice their all and wish it more.

Such the similitude! and now behold
The truth which it conveys; the world is sold
Bond-slave to evil; charity is cold;

Faith is well-nigh extinct: our God and Lord,
No longer by ungrateful man adored,
Is slighted and insulted or ignored.

God sends His Son! See Him in lowly guise
As Son of Man beneath Judea's skies
His strategy of mercy exercise:

He treads, attended by a chosen band,
The Jordan's valley and Tiberias' strand,
The towns and homesteads of the Holy Land.

He calls His subjects now as He did then
To wage a war of love on erring men
And win them back to their liege Lord again.

Leading His hosts 'gainst unbelief and pride,
He bids them in His destiny confide,
And gives Himself to combat at their side.

"We will," He says, "as comrades charge the foe;
I in the forefront of the strife will go;
You shall with Me achieve his overthrow.

"Would you My triumph and My glory share,
Together we must toil and hardships bear,
And what I dare to do, you too must dare.

"The victory's certain;—even now for them
Who share My toils, with many a sparkling gem
There is prepared a heavenly diadem."

What man could eloquence like this resist?
Who would not under such a chief enlist?
By whom would victory on such terms be missed?

And such true hearts and staunch as know Christ best
Will their entire devotedness attest
By sacrifice of all by them possessed:

To those who know how Christ in anguish strove,—
How Christ, thorn-crowned, for them bright garlands wove,
To offer all they have, were treasure-trove!

Eternal Lord, Who art the Lord alone,
Helped by Thy grace, Thy Majesty I own
And lay my holocaust before Thy Throne:

Before Thy Goodness, boundless as Thy Might,
Before Thy gracious Mother, in the sight
Of all Thy Sons and Daughters robed in white

I solemnly declare my wish,—my will,—
My firm resolve, if by such purpose still
I may more perfectly the end fulfil

Of my creation, I will follow Thee,
And bear all wrongs that may be laid on me,—
Affronts, upbraidings, slights shall welcome be.

I will be poor, as Thou wast poor below,—
At least in spirit, yea, and really so,
Wouldst Thou on me so great a boon bestow.

Such is my wish;—such, Lord, my rooted will,—
Such my determinate resolve, if still
I may the better thus my end fulfil.

Soul of Christ, do Thou sanctify my soul;
Body of Christ, Thy virtue make me whole;
And Blood of Christ, my passions' thirst control:

Cleanse, Water from Christ's Side, my heart from stain:
Passion of Christ, support me in my pain:
Let me not call on Thee, dear Lord, in vain.

Within Thy Sacred Wounds Thy servant hide:
Let nothing ever part me from Thy Side:
Defend me from the foe's malignant pride.

Call me what time my passing bell shall toll,
And bid me, with Thy Saints, reach Thee my goal,
To praise Thee while for aye the ages roll.

CANTO 2.

THE INCARNATION.

The Son of God, Whom Choirs Seraphic hymn,—
In Whose compare e'en Seraphs' flames are dim,
Whose chariot is the strong-winged Cherubim,

From Heaven to earth descends, in might arrayed,
Bearing His Sacred Oriflamme displayed,
To lead His chosen in the Grand Crusade.

What pageants herald His descent to earth?
What proud insignia mark His Kingly worth?
What royal circumstance surrounds His Birth?

He calls not Mother some illustrious Queen,
But, choosing an estate obscure and mean,
Is in contempt surnamed the Nazarene.

God it had grieved to see His work undone,
And all mankind to foul rebellion won,
Meshed in the toils by Satan's envy spun:

And when, to save the world, the Triune planned
The Infinite descent, the Son o'erscanned
The interspace no creature could have spanned,

And calmly gauging the profound abyss,
Bent on restoring fallen man to bliss,
Humbled Himself that Ruth and Right might kiss.

God looked upon the shipwrecked world; alas!
In every clime, through every rank and class
What found the Holiest but a seething mass

Of pestilent corruption? Rich and poor,
Noble and peasant, literate and boor,
Saxon and Kelt, Slav, Northman, Indian, Moor:

Some turning night to day to swell their treasure;
Some grasping honours without stint or measure;
Some sensual revelling in wanton pleasure:

Some being born, some sick, some hale and sound,
Some smiling with the orange blossoms crowned,
Some in death's throes, some in their cerecloth wound.

Here women making traffic of their charms,
Or terror-struck by real or false alarms,—
Scared, trembling victims mid the strife of arms.

Here, men in peace, with long laborious toil
Reaping the hard-earned product of the soil;
There, men at war, athirst for blood and spoil!

Such was the chequered, ever-varying scene
The Eternal looked on from the blue serene,
Intent with pardoning love to intervene.

Now, as my strains still loftier soar and higher,
O, may the Holiest by His Breath inspire
The trembling chords of my unskilful lyre.

God, Three in One, is Infinite, Immense,
Essential Wisdom, pure Omnipotence,
Passing all creatures' intellect and sense!

Lo! here the vaulted azure; God is here!
Above, below, around, afar and near;
He with His Presence fills the starry sphere.

Double the radius of the tranquil blue;—
Stretch into space beyond;—yet holds it true
Our God is present in that distance too.

Add space on space and lose thyself in thought,
Thou hast not yet the first beginning caught;
Rest! Be content! Thy utmost strain is nought!

'Tis strange indeed the Boundless Infinite
Should deign to stoop from His essential height
And quit the realms of everlasting Light;—

Should not disdain a humble Virgin's womb,
While in the distance pain and suffering loom,
And at the last the loneness of a tomb.

It is no marvel that the narrow mind
Of grovelling materialists should find
A blaze, like lightning-flash, to strike them blind

In this deep mystery of God! Yet, list!
Bethink thee: doth Infinity consist
Only in space or power? Peer through the mist

That hides thy treasure from thee and confess,—
God must, no less, infinity possess
In Love and Charity and Tenderness.

Ah! God is good! His very Name is Good!
Grant Power were baffled, yet His Mercy could
Draw Him to condescend to creaturehood.

As human efforts fail to measure space,
So must they lack far more the power to trace
The fathomless abyss of Love and Grace:

Yet may created love advise us well
And something of the wondrous nature tell
Of Love Divine by distant parallel.

Look at the living thing the optic glass
Brings to thy ken, to which a turf of grass
Seems like a continent too wide to pass:

See how those microscopic creatures share
God's ever-watchful, all-preserving care,
And then, for greater love towards man prepare.

Those are God's foot-prints, but in man we trace
His image rational; nay more, by grace,
His likeness still, though sin the lines deface.

Though painted flame is but a lifeless sign,
Yet to the utmost human love refine
And, from a mother's, judge of Love Divine.

hat then doth demonstrate the ardour best
f the strong yearnings of a mother's breast
r its degree most vividly attest?

o! Bethlehem's mothers clasp their babes around,
hile Herod's slaves would dash them to the ground;—
he mothers claim the death their infants found.

ove for the object loved will venture all,—
rain to the dregs the vinegar and gall
nd go on loving still till death befall.

ue, need were none th' Eternal should be slain
o raise the dead in sin, to life again,
or God in fine is Lord and Sovereign.

et pardon granted without pain or cost
emed to our God, Love's great occasion lost
o lose Itself and all Its stores exhaust.

od was made Man! Seek not His earthly course
o poise and weigh by purblind reason's force:—
springs from Love as boundless as its source!

s! God is Good! His very Name is Good!
y Power were baffled, yet His Goodness would
oop from His Throne and put on creaturehood!

Nazareth dwelt, within a lowly cot,
Virgin pure from fallen nature's blot,
nknown to men and peaceful in her lot:

ere Mary, child of Joachim and Ann,
d spouse to holy Joseph, prayed and span,
edestined Mother of The Word made Man.

vas hers the Prophet's words with care to read,
d with the Lord Who prompted them to plead
r the quick advent of the Promised Seed.

Too long had Lucifer, man's deadly foe,
Deluged the world with sinfulness and woe :—
How, as she pondered, did her longing grow

To see that Second Eve from whom God said
As from a cloud the Just One should be shed :—
Who, by her Seed, should crush the serpent's head.

She conned Isaias' mystic words and there
Read of the Virgin Spouse, elect to bear
At once King David's Lord and David's Heir :

Whose Name is Wonderful,—in Counsel great,—
Adonai,—God,—Whose simple Will is fate,—
Peace-loving Prince,—Supreme in Kingly state,—

Destined the Key of sovereign power to wield,—
Is God-with-us, our buckler and our shield,—
The Lord our Justice, from high Heaven revealed.

How did the child of Ann reflect with awe
On all that Moses figured in the Law,
On all that Prophets of Messias saw.

And oft-times when the Temple's Courts she trod,
Of her she thought whose type was Aaron's Rod
That blossomed almonds by the Ark of God,—

Greater than Sara, Abraham's honoured wife,—
Greater than her, the joy of Isaac's life,
Rebecca, in whose womb with dubious strife

Nations contended in the rival twain,
Jacob and Esau,—nor could Lia's train
Of many a chrism-anointed sovereign

Make her that Virgin's peer ;—nor Anna's joy,
As mother of the guileless Temple-boy,
Samuel, of Heli's fate the herald coy.

Judith, whose beauty charmed the Assyrian host
By Holofernes led to Japhet's coast,
Could not of glory like that Virgin's boast!

Nor could the Queenly Esther, though her prayer
Won the Great King her countrymen to spare,
With God's unrivalled favourite compare.

While thus the sense of prophecy she learned,
Mary for that blest Woman's advent yearned
Through whom Eve's curse should be to blessing turned.

O, how she prayed, though in the lowest place
Among her handmaids to behold her face
And though from far to share her smile and grace!

At Nazareth, in silence and in prayer
The Virgin watched,—none else save God was there,—
While spring-tide breezes cooled the midnight air.

With fervent zeal she Israel's God implored;—
'Hasten the coming of Thy Christ, O Lord!
Let man again find peace, to life restored!

'As Moses, when oppression plied its worst,
To Israel's sons Thine ancient deeds rehearsed,
Roused them to freedom and their fetters burst;

'Now is it time Thy Goodness to display:—
O, pierce the darkness with light's cheering ray;—
Dispel the baleful mist;—change night to day!

'Inspired by Thee, the Prophet Daniel speaks
And counts the tale exact of seventy weeks;—
Haste Thee! the morning light the Orient streaks!

'All nations are expectant! not a clime
But feels the dawning of the gracious time
When Justice shall prevail o'er sin and crime.

"Thou, Who art Israel's God, the Great I AM,
Fulfil Thy promise made to Abraham,
Send forth for Sion's peace the heaven-born Lamb!"

And Mary paused;—when, lo! a radiant guest
Brought from the skies the answer to her quest,
Never till now preferred by lips so blest.

To her the Angel, from the Triune sped,
Bending in loving reverence his head,
"Hail, full of grace! the Lord is with thee!" said.

"Blest thou above all women!" Mary heard
The Angel's Salutation, and his word
A sacred tremor in her bosom stirred.

She listened: then, with modest shame suffused,
To neither pride nor doubt his words abused
But on their import in meek silence mused.

The Angel, answering her secret thought,
Then told her how from Israel's God he brought
Glad tidings of great joy with mercy fraught.

"Be not afraid: the Lord hath sought around
A helpmate for His purpose; thou hast wound
Thy love about His Law, and He hath found

"Thee proper to His Will! The quest is done:
He chooseth thee for Mother to His Son,
And JESUS thou shalt name the Holy One.

"He, Light of Light, shall o'er the nations beam
And endless ages as they onward stream
Shall humbly own His sway as King supreme."

Mary in meek astonishment replied,
"What wondrous meaning may thy greeting hide?
Angel of God, I am a Virgin-Bride!"

"The Lord respects thy spotless maidenhood,"
The Angel answering said; "Thou shalt be wooed
By the All-Holy Spirit; He shall brood

"In mystic shadowing o'er thee and His Power
Descend on thee in fertilizing shower,
Making thy breast the Son's unsullied bower.

"The Holy One Who can with gladness fill
The sterile wife, is able if He will
To keep a Virgin Mother, Virgin still.

"Thy cousin, lo! whose barrenness so grieved
Her and her husband, hath a son conceived
And towards her term six months hath now achieved."

Still silence reigned in Heaven: the mighty scheme,—
The end of Moses' Law,—the Prophets' theme,—
God's honour to repair and man redeem,

Hangs on a Virgin's breath! if she decline,
The Word is not made Flesh! if she resign
Her will to God's Will, men shall grow divine!

Troubled, not disconcerted, she beheld
Unfolded clear the mysteries of eld
And all the clouds that compassed them, dispelled.

She saw, should she consent, the griefs in store,—
The dark horizon sorrow-mantled o'er
With griefs more sad than earth e'er knew before.

She spoke; "Behold the handmaid of the Lord,
Be it to me according to Thy Word."
And Gabriel straight the Word made Flesh adored.

At Nazareth in silence and in prayer
The Virgin Mother watched: God-Man was there;
And spring-tide breezes cooled the midnight air.

Eternal Lord, Who art the Lord alone,
Helped by Thy grace Thy Majesty I own,
And lay my holocaust before Thy Throne:

Before Thy Goodness boundless as Thy Might,
Before Thy gracious Mother,—in the sight
Of all Thy Sons and Daughters, robed in white,—

I solemnly declare my wish,—my will,—
My firm resolve,—if by such purpose still
I may more perfectly the end fulfil

Of my creation, I will follow Thee
And bear all wrongs that may be laid on me;—
Affronts, upbraidings, slights shall welcome be.

I will be poor as Thou wast poor below,
At least in spirit; yea, and really so,
Wouldst Thou on me so great a boon bestow.

Such is my wish, such, Lord, my rooted will,—
Such my determinate resolve if still
I may the better, thus, my end fulfil.

CANTO 3.

THE VISITATION.

The Virgin spoke the word and it was done:
Henceforth the Word of God, the Eternal Son,
With Manhood is indissolubly One:

The Son of God, the Son of Man shall be,
And Mary, by the same Divine decree,
Mother of God to all eternity.

Flesh of her flesh, and of her substance fed,
Deriving from her blood, the Blood He shed,
God-Man begins the life on earth He led,

All unesteemed, all hidden from mankind,
Unknown to His own people or maligned,
Pursued by foes as virulent as blind.

The tabernacle of His Mother's womb
Shrouds Him in darkness silent as the tomb,
While death and anguish in the distance loom.

Here He obeys, as in the Mystic Bread,
Borne, Sacred Housel, to the sick man's bed,
Hither and thither carried, like one dead.

And she who bears Him in her virgin breast,
By the Divine communication blest,
Is still, while most exalted, lowliest.

Joseph she serves with sweet endearing arts,
Yet hides her secret in her heart of hearts,
Nor e'en to him the mystery imparts.

Exalted high above all woman-kind,—
Her grace transcends the Angels' gifts combined,—
Yet, by her lowliness, is all consigned

To utter silence! Joseph knoweth not
The King of Kings hath made his humble cot
His Royal Home, and sanctified the spot

For future pilgrimage to utmost time:
Mary adores her privilege sublime
With higher love than Seraphs e'en can climb.

She calls to mind the word by Gabriel spoken
To vouch his truth,—the heaven accorded token,—
Sure warrant that God's Word shall not be broken.

She longs her cousin's happiness to share
And wait upon her with assiduous care,
And see her own Son's promised harbinger.

That herald child like all of human race,
Scarred with the stain of Adam's sad disgrace,
Had of primæval justice lost the trace:

But if of Jeremias erst, we read
E'en from his mother's womb, so God decreed,
That he from sin original was freed,—

Much more behoved it that this unborn child
Should by prenatal grace be reconciled,
And from his mother's womb spring undefiled.

Therefore, that nought the hallowing grace might stay,
God's Mother rose in haste and sped her way
From Nazareth southwards, where the mountains lay

That compassed ancient Cariath-arbe's site,—
The Levite city, refuge in his flight
Who chanced his neighbour to the death to smite.

Where Ephron led of old his flocks to browse
And pledged his farmstead with his nation's vows,
Dwelt Mary's cousin with her speech-reft spouse.

Six months before when, taken from the urn,
The lot on Zachary had fixed his turn
The incense in the Holy Place to burn;—

When Sion's sons, who mourned her widowhood,
Prayed to the Lord of Hosts for Sion's good;—
Hard by the Altar's right an Angel stood:

He bade the priest be glad, for God had heard
The people's prayer; and then, to seal his word,
He thus to Zachary the proof averred:

"Thy wife, the term of nature duly run,
In thine old age shall bear to thee a son,
And thou shalt name him John,—God's Gracious one.

"Thou shalt have joy and gladness; o'er the earth
Many shall joy exulting in his birth:—
Great before God and men shall be his worth!

"He shall not taste the drinks the sense that drown;
On him the Spirit shall with might come down,
Elect from birth to wear a martyr's crown.

"Through him, the herald-star of truth and grace,
Shall many a one of Israel's chosen race
Turn from the paths of sin and seek God's Face.

"In spirit and in might Elias, he
Shall in the children's hearts from sin set free
Revive their fathers' hopes; and men shall see

"A perfect people, ripe to meet the Lord,—
To the true wisdom of the just restored,—
And God, according to His Will, adored!"

The Angel ceased: the priest in wonder raised
His eyes, and on the heavenly vision gazed
In hesitating doubtfulness amazed,—

Then asked, while mournfully he shook his head,
As one whose hopes of fatherhood were dead,
"How can I credit what thy lips have said?"

In turn the Angel with remonstrance grave
Thus to the doubting priest his answer gave,
"Is it in vain thy confidence I crave?

"Lo! I am Gabriel who, thou knowest well,
To such as love the Lord His mercies tell,
But wrath to such as 'gainst His love rebel.

"Therefore shalt thou be reft of speech and dumb,
And pass the months in silence wearisome
Till the fulfilment of my words shall come."

Six months had passed when Mary with her Child,—
What time the rains had ceased and summer smiled,—
Sped o'er Samaria's plains and Juda's wild:

Legions of Angels, to the eye unseen,
Attend the footsteps of their new-made Queen,
Obsequious here as in the blue serene.

Wayfarers look,—move on with heedless air,—
And unconcerned pass by the blessed pair,
For no one of them dreams God-Man is there.

Now, on the horizon, Hebron's turrets rise,
And Mary ponders in what loving wise
She may her cousin with glad joy surprise.

There in the freshening breeze of eventide
Elizabeth her pleasing labour plied
And nursed her garden in its floral pride.

She sighed, still counting up the nine months' sum,—
For Zachary had now six months been dumb,—
Three more must pass before relief shall come.

Mary drew near her;—at her gentle tread
The venerable matron turned her head,
And Mary beaming with affection said:

"Elizabeth! my own dear cousin!—What!—
Dost thou not know me?" Still she answered not,—
But fixed in awe-struck rapture, on the spot

Sank on her knees:—the Virgin, hastening near
Fell on her neck and said; "Why! cousin dear!
Why, it is Mary! what is there to fear?"

"Mary! I know thee! Yea, and love thee well!
I love thee dearly, more than tongue can tell,—
Yet art thou shrouded in a sacred spell

"Which now resolves itself:—above the rest
Of women art thou blest; and more than blest
The Fruit that harbours in thy Virgin breast!

"The babe within my bosom leaped with glee
At thy sweet greeting: whence is this to me
The Mother of my Lord should come to me?"

God, Who His Spirit on His Prophets poured,
Inspired in Mary now a nobler chord
And His meek handmaid magnified the Lord!

"My soul doth magnify the Lord; My tongue
To praise the God of my salvation strung
With joyous hymn and jubilance hath rung!

"Behold, He hath looked down from Heaven to earth
And graced His handmaid, albeit nothing worth:—
All generations in the world's wide girth

"Shall call me Blessed; For the Mighty One,
Holy His Name, to me great things hath done,
And ruth to men of peace, from sire to son.

"His Arm hath marvels wrought; the proud man's mind
And vain conceits He hath to shame consigned,—
Put down the mighty and raised up the hind.

"He feeds the hungry, fills them with good things,
Confounds the rich, and mocks their reckonings,
And all their hoarded wealth to nothing brings.

"Now He consoles His Israel, as before
He promised to the Patriarchs of yore,
To Abraham and His seed for evermore."

The three months passed: and he who then was born
Shall, when adult, of judgment Israel warn;
Herald to Him Who winnoweth out the corn.

Eternal Lord, Who art the Lord alone,
Helped by Thy grace, Thy Majesty I own,
And lay my holocaust before Thy Throne.

Before Thy Goodness, boundless as Thy Might,
Before Thy gracious Mother, in the sight
Of all Thy Sons and Daughters, robed in white,—

I solemnly declare my wish,—my will,—
My firm resolve,—if by such purpose still
I may more perfectly the end fulfil

Of my creation, I will follow Thee
And bear all wrongs that may be laid on me;—
Affronts, upbraidings, slights shall welcome be.

I will be poor as Thou wast poor below,
At least in spirit; yea, and really so,
Wouldst Thou on me so great a boon bestow.

Such is my wish; such, Lord, my rooted will,—
Such my determinate resolve, if still
I may the better, thus, my end fulfil.

CANTO 4.

THE NATIVITY.

Men scorn thee Nazareth! Yet Judea's coasts
Own not a town that greater lustre boasts
Than thee, the sojourn of the Lord of Hosts,—

The home of Mary, God's own Mother blest,
The home of Joseph, whom her lips addressed
As foster-father of the Holiest.

Moons wax and wane: soon must bright summer yield
Its flowers to wintry floods in vale and field,
And Mary's motherhood shall be revealed.

Oft did the Scribes in Mary's hearing quote
The words Micheas of Emmanuel wrote,
How Bethlehem, from Nazareth so remote,

Should be His Birth-place. Can the Prophet's word
Have its fulfilment?—Lo! with joy she heard
Spread far and wide a rumour that concurred

Straight with the Sacred Text: Octavius laid
Commandment on the world there should be made
A general census,—and the world obeyed.

Ah! little dreamed the Cæsar in his pride
He was but leading Joseph and his Bride
To keep in David's city Christmas-tide!

God in Three Persons,—by the world unknown,—
(So few He finds His Majesty to own),
Surveys the earth from His Empyreal Throne:

He is forgotten; all his power ignored;
His grace no longer sought nor aid implored;—
Scarcely a remnant left to serve the Lord!

What wonder therefore that the blessed pair,
God's earthly parents, like contempt should share
Without the world's regard or thought or care?

They did not move but Cherubs with them came
And Seraphs compassed them with ardent flame;—
Yet no man welcomed them or asked their name!

Deep in their hearts their mystery they hide
With mutual trust and solace satisfied :
Minded by God, what matters aught beside ?

They mount the hill, they journey through the dell ;
Traverse the land where Israel's rivals dwell,
And sit to rest awhile by Jacob's Well

And no man heedeth them : to God the Son,
No sign of honour or respect is done :
The presence of His Godhead known to none.

They near the walls of Bethlehem : at its gate
Its elders ranged in patriarchal state
Each claimant to the Royal Stock await :

The great, for passport, needs but give his name :
The rich, well-nigh unasked, makes good his claim ;
The poor, though not refused, is passed with shame.

Joseph advances, in his turn, to assert
His right to David's lineage : sharp and curt
The answer given ;—the menials all alert

Thrust him aside to give his betters way :—
He yields while they their title-deeds display,
Then proves his royal blood no less than they.

Yet David's self contrasted with the King
In Mary's bosom could no title bring
To kingly worship, worth the honouring.

Nor does their claim allowed, the twain exempt
From further slights :—lacqueys and knaves unkempt
Greet with rude mockery their next attempt

A shelter in the public inn to find :—
The greed of gain made host and hostess blind :
The winter's blast itself was less unkind !

Where ring the merry song and loud carouse
The keepers of the inn refuse to house
Mary, God's Mother, and her heart-sore Spouse!

The sun is set,—night closes in,—it snows,—
It's dark,—it freezes hard,—the sharp wind blows:
Where shall God's Mother go to seek repose?

My God! and can I murmur when at times
I suffer from rude seasons, untoward climes,
Or with my tastes not every trifle chimes?

Shall Mary in the bleak cold winter shiver?
Shall Mary like the trembling aspen quiver?
And I presume that, like some tranquil river,

My days shall pass in comfort and in ease,
And never aught befall but what I please?
My selfish will the rule of God's decrees!

Joseph, for Mary's sake, distraught with care,
Taking no thought of self, seeks here and there
Some roof to screen her from the midnight air:

At last he lights upon a ruined shed,—
Exposed all round,—ill-covered overhead,—
And gently there the Queen of Angels led.

Such rough, ungarnished lodging grieved him sore;—
Nought but the naked earth to serve for floor;—
No shutters 'gainst the cold,—no air-tight door!

Meanwhile his gentle spouse with tender hand
Soothed him, at her distress well nigh unmanned,
And bade him think how all by God was planned:

How God would have His Son exposed to scorn,—
In cold and poverty would have Him born,—
Of all that savours of indulgence shorn.

He listened, and with silence acquiesced,
And in return the way-worn Virgin pressed
To seek on some poor scanty straw her rest.

He sallied forth, and with what haste he could
Sought some provision in the neighbourhood;—
Returned;—and at the stable's threshold stood:

He saw the Mother rapt in ecstasy:
Her new-born Infant resting on her knee;—
The Son of God—and Son of Man—is He!

She lays Him in the manger: swathing bands
Confined in straitening folds His Feet and Hands
Whose Will not all creation's force withstands:—

An ox and ass, the only living things
That honour, while the Angels fold their wings,
The presence-chamber of the King of Kings!

At Bethlehem, in silence and in prayer
Mary and Joseph knelt: God-Man was there:
And the keen west wind chilled the midnight air.

Eternal Lord, Who art the Lord alone,
Helped by Thy grace, Thy Majesty I own,
And lay my holocaust before Thy Throne:

Before Thy Goodness, boundless as Thy Might,
Before Thy gracious Mother, in the sight
Of all Thy Sons and Daughters robed in white,—

I solemnly declare my wish,—my will,—
My firm resolve,—if by such purpose still
I may more perfectly the end fulfil

Of my creation,—I will follow Thee,
And bear all wrongs that may be laid on me;—
Affronts, upbraidings, slights shall welcome be.

I will be poor, as Thou wast poor below,
At least in spirit; yea, and really so,
Wouldst Thou on me so great a boon bestow.

Such is my wish; such, Lord, my rooted will,—
Such my determinate resolve, if still
I may the better, thus, my end fulfil.

Soul of Christ, do Thou sanctify my soul:
Body of Christ, Thy virtue make me whole:
And Blood of Christ, my passions' thirst control.

Cleanse, Water from Christ's Side, my heart from stain:
Passion of Christ support me in my pain:
Let me not call on Thee, dear Lord, in vain.

Within Thy Sacred Wounds Thy servant hide:
Let nothing ever part me from Thy Side:
Defend me from the foe's malignant pride.

Call me what time my passing bell shall toll,
And bid me, with Thy Saints, reach Thee my goal,
To praise Thee while for aye the ages roll.

CANTO 5.

THE SHEPHERDS.

All held its wonted course: o'er moor and fell
Sleep-fostering night had spread her ebon spell;
Bright shone the glittering stars: the tinkling bell

Now here now yonder mid the flocks was heard
Breaking the silence: the tall palm tree stirred
With gusts capricious; the night-loving bird,

The horned owlet, through the shadows swept
With oary wing: o'er Bethlehem slumber crept:—
Bethlem unconscious of her treasure slept.

Upon the hills were shepherds, quick to catch
Each sound that broke the calm; too glad to snatch
Some fitful sleep, sheltered by meagre thatch

From the keen wind:—good men, they gossiped o'er
Quaint tales of shepherds,—famous men of yore:—
How Jacob's self the shaggy sheepskin wore;—

How David brandished, too, the shepherd's crook—
(So Rabbis read from Samuel's Sacred Book)—
And, a mere stripling, aim effective took

And smote to death Goliath and the bear:
At last the Elder bade the troop prepare
For needful slumber with their wonted prayer.

"God is my Shepherd! He, in pastures fair
Hath set my feet and made my dwelling there:
By flowing streams I breathe the fresh'ning air.

"Safe from bewildering falsehood's tangled maze
His Hand hath led me by the pleasant ways
Of grace and justice: to His Name be praise!

"Yea, though I tread alone the dreary heath,
Unharmed He keeps me from the lion's teeth,
From storm above, from pit-falls spread beneath.

"Thou art our Shepherd, Lord, and Thou alone!
As a good Shepherd, Thou dost know Thine own!
As a good Shepherd, by Thine own art known!

"Thou, Who art God of Israel in the height,
Unbounded in Thy Wisdom, Goodness, Might,
Thy sheepfold guard from ravening wolves by night:

"Thou Who art named the Great I Am Who Am,
Revealed to Moses and to Abraham,—
Send forth for Sion's peace the Heaven-born Lamb.

"Make good the words of ancient prophecy;—
Send forth the longed-for Day-spring from on high,
With rays of hope light up the eastern sky.

"How long dost Thou delay? O Lord, how long?
Thy people's foes are numerous and strong,—
Too heavy on them weighs the oppressors' wrong!

"Haste, Lord, to save! O haste Thee to redeem!"
Ended their prayer, behold a dazzling beam
From heaven to earth with sudden brightness stream:

That ray the earthward path from heaven defined
Of a celestial messenger, assigned
To bear good news of mercy to mankind.

With palpitating hearts,—with breath suppressed,—
Throbbing with fear,—with wondering awe possessed
The Shepherds gazed upon the Heavenly Guest.

But soon kind words announcing God's good-will
From the bright Angel's gracious lips distil
And the poor Shepherds' hearts with gladness fill.

Fear not, ye Shepherds! it hath pleased the Lord,
The Lord in your night orisons adored,
To grant the boon your prayers e'en now implored.

"And to engage you more to praise Him well,
I come, glad tidings of great joy to tell
For you and all His people Israel.

"Lo! To your great contentment be it known,—
This very night hath God His Mercy shown,—
In Bethlehem born, the Heir to David's throne!

"And this shall be the token; ye shall find
The Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, reclined
In a poor manger-bed with rushes lined."

Then straightway with the Angel there was seen
A host of Spirits, whose resplendent sheen
Bathed in pure light white rock and mountain green;

And thus they sang—the heavenly minstrelsy,—
"To God all glory in the Highest be!
And peace on earth, to men from malice free!

"We praise Thee, O our God! Thy Name we bless,
We praise Thee, Lord! Thy Goodness we confess,
And our whole being bounds with thankfulness.

"O praise the Lord our God, the heavenly King!
To the Almighty Father glory bring!
Let heaven's high vault with praise to Silo ring!

"O praise the Lord our God! O Lamb Divine!
Son of the Father! By that heart of Thine
To earth's poor denizens Thine Ear incline!

"Thou, Who the sins of men dost take away,—
Thou, Who in Heaven and earth hast boundless sway,
In mercy hear Thy suppliant children pray.

"For Thou alone art great! Thine equal, none!
The Lord and the most High! The Father's Son!
With Him and with His Gift, in glory One!"

Their carol sung, the Angels sped their way
To the bright realms of everlasting day
And there on heaven-strung harps renewed their lay.

Meanwhile the Shepherds to each other said,
"Hence let us hie to Bethlehem; to the shed,—
And seek the Saviour in His manger-bed!

"How good is God Who hath to us revealed,
To us poor humble shepherds of the field,
The secrets from the great and wise concealed."

So on they sped, quitting the pasture wild
While mutual communings the way beguiled,
And sought at Bethlehem the Holy Child.

How long till they arrive it seems to wait!
How their hearts beat when reaching Bethlehem's gate
They look for traces of Messias' state!

They mark the token and with Mary find
The Infant, wrapped in swaddling clothes, reclined
In a poor manger-bed, with rushes lined.

They chanting in His praise their simple hymn
Survey each feature and each tiny limb
Of that sweet Child Who made the Cherubim!

Nor empty-handed to the stall they came,—
They bring the Lamb of God, a lamb,—in name
And silent sufferance with His the same.

They told how Angels, from the skies come down,
Bade them go seek in Bethlehem, David's town,
The promised Christ, the Heir to David's crown.

At early dawn,—their humble worship paid,—
First earthly heralds of the Gospel made,
They tell the neighbours where the Christ is laid.

The most derided and gave little heed,—
Told them 'twas theirs, their silly flocks to feed
And keep to shepherding, if they would speed!

Yet some there were in Bethlehem more wise
Who, with religious sense of deep surprise,
Heard Shepherds speak of tidings from the skies.

Mary, already in God's ways adept
Each treasured utterance in her bosom kept,
Smiled when her Infant smiled, sighed when He wept!

Meanwhile the favoured Shepherds homeward sped,—
A halo of rejoicing round them shed,—
And far and wide the gracious tidings spread.

And He is God Who lieth in the stall,
Ruler of all and yet unknown to all!
Strange such self-emptying should e'er befall!

Say, what could bring the Eternal God so low?
And why the learned and the great forego
And to the ignorant His secrets show?

God chooseth for Himself a low estate,
To teach mankind the pride of life to hate
And make no count of honour's glittering bait.

Blest they who set on earthly joys no store!
For them wide open stands Heaven's golden door,
And they shall tread as Kings its sapphire floor.

Eternal Lord, Who art the Lord alone,
Helped by Thy grace, Thy Majesty I own
And lay my holocaust before Thy Throne:

Before Thy Goodness, boundless as Thy Might,
Before Thy gracious Mother, in the sight
Of all Thy Sons and Daughters robed in white,—

I solemnly declare my wish,—my will,—
My firm resolve,—if by such purpose still
I may more perfectly the end fulfil

Of my creation,—I will follow Thee,
And bear all wrongs that may be laid on me;—
Affronts, upbraidings, slights shall welcome be.

I will be poor, as Thou wast poor below,
At least in spirit; yea, and really so,
Wouldst Thou on me so great a boon bestow.

Such is my wish; such, Lord, my rooted will,—
Such my determinate resolve, if still
I may the better, thus, my end fulfil.

Soul of Christ, do Thou sanctify my soul:
Body of Christ, Thy virtue make me whole:
And Blood of Christ, my passions' thirst control.

Cleanse, Water from Christ's Side, my heart from stain:
Passion of Christ, support me in my pain:
Let me not call on Thee, dear Lord, in vain.

Within Thy Sacred Wounds Thy servant hide:
Let nothing ever part me from Thy Side:
Defend me from the foe's malignant pride.

Call me what time my passing bell shall toll,
And bid me, with Thy Saints, reach Thee my goal,
To praise Thee while for aye the ages roll.

CANTO 6.

THE CIRCUMCISION.

Strange! passing strange! almost beyond belief
That God the Son, Redemption's Head and Chief,
Should stoop to poverty!—To suffer grief,—

To suffer pain and anguish,—bear the smart
Of cutting of the flesh and so take part
In penance sore, sign of the sin-scarred heart,

Seems to o'ermaster faith; and yet, 'tis true!
No sooner born but He is sufferer too;—
And with His growth His pains more painful grew.

The octave-day is come: one week of days
Mary, absorbed in rapturous love and praise,
To her sweet Child adoring worship pays:

But now the Law of Moses claims its own;
Her Child with trenchant cut of steel or stone
Must as the Seed of Abraham be known.

Folding their wings mute Angels watched o'er-head;
By the keen knife the Blood of God is shed,
And Mary's transpierced heart, condoling, bled.

Now to the Babe Its Name the parents gave,
Name of redemption to the sin-bound slave,—
Jesus! Jehovah, full of might to save!

Jesus! Above all names supremely sweet,
For God-made-Man, as man's Redeemer, meet;
Befitting well Jehovah's Mercy-seat;

Name, glorified by Angel hosts on high,
Name, at the sound whereof the demons fly,
The strength of those who live, their hope who die;

Name that reverses sin's primeval ban,
Name that the work of grace on earth began,
Name full of hope to every Christian man.

Who, for their watchword, Jesus' Name shall take
Shall win the Angels' help for Jesus' sake,
And Satan's force with all his legions break.

Thrice Holy, Holy, Holy, Angels sing;
For they have never sinned: the Saints shall bring
Hosannas thrice to Jesus, suffering King.

Who would not keep that Name he loves so well
Graved on his heart of hearts, indelible,
And on its sweetness, still unsated dwell?

Henceforth, because the Babe Divine hath bled
A sun-like halo shineth round His Head
And Angels, Shepherds, Kings, His glory spread.

We, with devotion to such suffering due,
Will, at His word, the self-same track pursue
And daily in His strength our strength renew.

He will stand by us; He shall make us strong;
He, be our aid, life's rugged path along;
He in our home above, inspire our song.

Blessed be His Blood in Circumcision shed!
Blessed be the smart of Jesus' cradle-bed!
Blessed be His Name by suffering merited!

Eternal Lord, Who art the Lord alone,
Helped by Thy grace, Thy Majesty I own
And lay my holocaust before Thy Throne:

Before Thy Goodness, boundless as Thy Might,
Before Thy gracious Mother, in the sight
Of all Thy Sons and Daughters robed in white

I solemnly declare my wish,—my will,—
My firm resolve, if by such purpose still
I may more perfectly the end fulfil

Of my creation, I will follow Thee,
And bear all wrongs that may be laid on me,—
Affronts, upbraidings, slights shall welcome be.

I will be poor, as Thou wast poor below,
At least in spirit; yea, and really so,
Wouldst Thou on me so great a boon bestow.

Such is my wish; such, Lord, my rooted will,—
Such my determinate resolve, if still
I may the better, thus, my end fulfil.

Soul of Christ, do Thou sanctify my soul:
Body of Christ, Thy virtue make me whole:
And Blood of Christ, my passions' thirst control.

Cleanse, Water from Christ's Side, my heart from stain:
Passion of Christ, support me in my pain:
Let me not call on Thee, dear Lord, in vain.

Within Thy Sacred Wounds Thy servant hide:
Let nothing ever part me from Thy Side:
Defend me from the foe's malignant pride.

Call me what time my passing bell shall toll,
And bid me, with Thy Saints, reach Thee my goal,
To praise Thee while for aye the ages roll.

CANTO 7.

THE MAGI.

Wouldst thou unchallenged pass the narrow gate
Thou must prize riches at their genuine rate,
And count as dross the things that men count great.

From God-Incarnate's life on earth is known
How Satan and his hosts are overthrown,—
Since God-made-Man made poverty His own.

God in the underbrush finds foxes holes,
And birds their refuge on the woodland knolls,
And subterranean cloisters for the moles:

Poorer than they, God's Son was sore bestead—
To rest His wearied limbs not e'en a shed!
No roof to shield Him from the storm o'erhead!

Best to be poor in spirit and in deed!
For those towards life eternal best shall speed
Who closest likeness to their Lord can plead:

What then? No hope the great and rich to save?
Nay, though the hazard and the risk be grave
Rich men may e'en be saints, be they but brave—

Brave thro' God's grace to welcome and confront
The world's contempt; and, as their Lord was wont,
To bear of sidelong glance and taunt the brunt.

Hail to the Kings of Araby the blest,
Who from the Orient star-led towards the West,
Found Israel's King, a Babe on Mary's breast.

Accustomed 'neath their cloudless skies to roam,
Long had the Magi in their Eastern home
Watched for the Star of hope in heaven's high dome;

At length a star appeared—a star most strange,
Such as ne'er yet had come within the range
Of their observance; one ne'er seen to change

Its quarter in the heavens; fixed in the West,
Not setting with the sun, it seemed at rest,
Ever inviting them to make their quest

Judea-wards. Beneath the clouds it shone
From dewy morn till eve; and glimmered on
When night was fain her starry crown to don.

It was indeed the Star of Jacob—theme
Of Balaam's rapture, and its mystic gleam
Ushered His Advent Who should reign supreme.

But, as at Ephrata, of all who saw
The new-born Saviour lying on the straw,
The very Sun of Justice failed to draw

More than a scanty few, so here, no more
Than three obeyed, by legendary lore
Hight Caspar, Balthasar, and Melchior.

Led by a voice which God's own Voice they deem,
They to their fellow-countrymen would seem
Dupes of a vain and unsubstantial dream:

Indeed, for Magian Kings, reputed wise,
To follow a chance meteor in the skies,
Might well, to human wisdom, breed surprise.

But there are souls by God's own Spirit taught,
Who 'neath the spell of revelation brought,
Discern God's guidance in the inspired thought.

When Noë, warned by God, prepared the Ark,
All that beheld him set him for a mark
For jest and banter: but the Patriarch,

Obedient to the gracious warning given,
Floated secure, while heaven's strong dykes were riven,
And scoffers sank beneath the flood, unshriven.

More wise the men of Ninivè! they heard,—
Kings, Princes, people, all to penance stirred,—
In sackcloth and with fast, the Prophet's word:

And though from all around the Magi hear—
Earnest remonstrance or contemptuous sneer,
Calm they persist without or doubt or fear.

They quit their home; and now, for many a day—
Still guided by the Star's persistent ray,
They track with confidence the Western Way.

Long space o'ertravelled, they attain one night
A spot where two ways meet: who choose the right
Quick gain Jerusalem; the morrow's light

Straight brings them to the City. So they slept,
And, in the morning, when the Sun had leapt
Its Eastern boundary, and its rays had swept

The shades of night away, the Royal Three,
Sanguine with hope, from all misgiving free,
Pursue the road towards Salem cheerily.

But scarce accomplished their familiar prayer,
They scan the heavens—the Star is no more there:—
Still they pursue their way, and unaware

The fault lay in themselves, they fondly deem
There needs no more, by mountain, vale and stream,
The onward guidance of the heaven-sent beam.

They surely erred; and had they heeded more,
The Star had ruled their steps as heretofore
And led them straight to Bethlehem's stable-door.

Yet was their error, through God's guiding hand,
Transformed to good: behold, a happy band
Of Innocents before God's Presence stand!

In truth, no sooner had the murderous troop
Of Herod's myrmidons at one fell swoop
Rifled the cradles, but a joyous group

Had sought the realms where sorrow is unknown;
And there with palm and crown and blithesome tone
They sport them gaily 'neath the emerald Throne.

Ere long the Magi in their royal State,
O'ershadowed by the olive and the date,
Draw nigh to Salem at its eastern gate.

They thought to find the city all astir:
Themselves displayed their incense, gold and myrrh,—
Gifts of their best, selected to confer

Honour on Him they sought for: but in vain
They looked for emblems of a Royal train,
And asked and wondered still, and asked again:

"Where is the new-born King of Juda's line?
Where is the King of Israel? He Whose sign
Has brought us hither? We have watched it shine

"High in the heavens: as still it hovered o'er
The westward road, it nursed our hope the more
And we are come The Great One to adore."

And all Jerusalem was moved; the King
Herod, with trouble heard them tidings bring
Which seemed the gauntlet to his crown to fling:

The populace indulge their wonted gibe,—
Herod takes counsel of each learned scribe,
Each grey-haired sage of Levi's priestly tribe:

He asks Messias' birth-place. They unrolled
The sacred parchments which the course unfold
Of Silo's Life and Acts. Therein 'twas told

That Bethlehem Ephrata had been decreed
To be the birth-place of the Promised Seed
Who should to victory Israel's armies lead.

So Herod bade the Royal Three repair
To Bethlehem's town and seek Messias there,
And should they find Him, they with studious care

Should bring him word that he, as they had done,
Might join in worshipping King David's Son,
And pay his homage to the Holy One.

The Magian Kings resume their onward way:
The Star, lo! reappears, and blithe and gay
They with exceeding joy its track obey.

Straight onward to the goal it moves along,
And they with eager expectation strong
And heedless of the idle staring throng

Press forward till, within the oxen's stall,
They find the Mother and the Lord of all
And at the Infant's Feet adoring fall.

Their gifts they offer: gold, as to a king;
Myrrh, as foreshadowing death's bitter sting;
Incense, for 'tis to God they worship bring.

Their homage paid, the Magi, Angel-led,
Crossing King Herod's purpose, homeward sped
And far and wide the gracious tidings spread.

And what could make the Eternal stoop so low
And choose three Gentile Kings His grace to know,
While heartless unconcern His people show?

Ah! men possessed of riches, learning, power,
May win the prize, through faith's still nobler dower,
Crowned with humility, God's favourite flower.

Blest they who on earth's riches set no store!
For them wide open stands heaven's golden door,
And they as kings shall tread its sapphire floor!

Eternal Lord, Who art the Lord alone,
Helped by Thy grace, Thy Majesty I own
And lay my holocaust before Thy Throne.

Before Thy Goodness, boundless as Thy Might,
Before Thy gracious Mother, in the sight
Of all Thy Sons and Daughters robed in white

I solemnly declare my wish—my will,—
My firm resolve,—if by such purpose still
I may more perfectly the end fulfil

Of my creation—I will follow Thee,
And bear all wrongs that may be laid on me,—
Affronts, upbraidings, slights shall welcome be.

I will be poor, as Thou wast poor below,
At least in spirit; yea and really so,
Wouldst Thou on me so great a boon bestow.

Such is my wish; such, Lord, my rooted will,—
Such my determinate resolve, if still
I may the better, thus, my end fulfil.

CANTO 8.

THE PRESENTATION.

Hard by the Holy City's eastern flank,
High overhanging Cedron's rocky bank,
Girded with colonnades in triple rank

Of fair Corinthian shafts, there rose on high,
Type of the Eternal Palace in the sky,
God's earthly Temple in its majesty.

The Holiest Place of all, the inmost shrine,
(Trod once a year by the Head of Aaron's line,
Whose legal priesthood figured one Divine),

Stood in a void of darkness all aloof
From earthly tumult; 'neath the self-same roof
(But parted by the veil's embroidered woof)

Crusted with gold,—of twice ten cubits height,—
The Holy Place reflected through the night
The mystic candelabrum's sevenfold light:

Outside the entrance towards the rising sun,
The altar rose, where, morning-tide begun
And before night-fall, sacrifice was done.

Here was the Priestly Court; on lower ground
The Court of Israel girded this around;
Beyond, the Gentiles' Court inferior wound.

The outmost circuit of the sacred pile
Rose colonnades with lofty nave and aisle,
And pinnacle high o'er the peristyle.

The whole, when kindled by the morning light,
Shone like a crown of gold that dazed the sight
Set in a casket of pure argent white.

'Tis forty days since Jesus, Mary's Child,
For the first time on His dear Mother smiled,
In sign that God and man were reconciled;

Such Child, such Mother, could incur no stain,
No need for them lost favour to regain
Or, as the meed of guilt, submit to pain:

Yet that fair Child, like one conceived in sin,
Though pure, as God Himself is pure, within,
With circumcision would His course begin;

And though no limner's skill can blanch the snow,
Nor art make lilies whiter than they grow,
Or blazon more the sun's meridian glow,

Yet, for the likeness that she bore her Son
Who man to God by self-abasement won,
No self-abasement would the Mother shun.

So Israel's Lily compassed with the thorn
Would not the purifying ritual scorn
Enjoined by Moses when a child was born.

By God's own Spirit God's good pleasure taught
The Virgin with her Spouse and Infant sought
The House of God, and as her offering brought

Two turtle-doves; then, passed the Temple door,
Gave to the Priest of God the Babe she bore
As Malachias thus foretold of yore:

"He, Whom ye seek, by Angel hosts adored,
By Whom the tarnished silver is restored,
Eftsoons shall to His Temple come;—The Lord!"

She with the Law complies with care precise,
Redeems her First-born at five sicles' price,
And takes Him back for Calvary's Sacrifice.

Her Child just born and yet divinely skilled,
From the first moment with omniscience filled,
The offering of Himself for sinners willed:

"For sheep and oxen's blood Thou hast not cared,
Thou for Thy Son a Body hast prepared:
Behold! I come, as Saints of old declared,

"To do Thy Will, O God! O God, I fain
Would welcome poverty, contempt and pain;
Would die for men to make them Thine again!"

The Eternal Father heard the oblation made
By His dear Son and through a Saint conveyed
His acquiescence; long had Simeon prayed

For Israel's consolation and had heard
Whispered within his soul the Spirit's word,
That his departure hence should be deferred

Till he himself had welcomed and adored
Him by Whom man should be to grace restored:
The promised King of Israel, Christ the Lord.

Now he beholds the Babe; and now at rest
Reverent receives It, folds It to his breast,
And in these words his depth of joy expressed:

"Long hast Thou nurtured hope within my heart!
Now dost Thou prove, O Lord, how true Thou art!
Now may Thy servant hence in peace depart!

"Mine eyes have seen the Light by Thee bestowed
To illume the Gentiles on the heavenly road,
And with Thy choicest gifts Thy people load."

Rendering the Infant to Its Mother's care,
With earnest accent of prophetic prayer
He called God's blessing on the wondering pair.

But as the Holy Infant he restored,
The Holy Ghost inspired him to record
To Mary's listening ears, the sevenfold sword

Should pierce her soul! Besides, the Child should be
Life from the dead to men from malice free
But downfall to the dry and sapless tree!

Then Anna, widow of fourscore and four,
Whose bended knees the Temple's pavement wore,—
Who day nor night forsook its hallowed floor

Fasting and praying:—with discourse sublime
Announced the fulness of Messias' time,—
The hope of Israel in a world of crime!

The sacred rites prescribed by Moses done,
The Virgin, folding to her heart her Son,
Foretastes their common sorrows, now begun.

CANTO 9.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

Wail, Rachel, wail! Wail for thy children slain!
Thou hast endured Eve's heritage of pain
And borne the throes of child-birth, all in vain!

Thy little ones lie dead! No sooner born
But Herod's ruffians from thy breast have torn
Thy shrieking babes! Heart-broken mothers, mourn!

Ah! ye may well your cherished darlings moan
Like rosebuds to the winds by tempests thrown;
Alas, poor mothers,—left to weep alone!

Infatuate King! for all thy jealous rage
Which neither years nor sickness can assuage,—
King David's Heir, Theme of the Sacred Page,

Hath 'scaped thy wrath! No sooner had the Kings,
Taught by the warning that a vision brings,
Turned their steps homewards, but on outspread wings

The Lord sent down an Angel from the skies
Who bade the slumbering foster-father rise
With eager haste: "Awake! awake!" he cries;

"Rise, take the Infant and His Mother hence,
And fly to Egypt; nor return from thence
Till I shall tell thee: fraud and violence

"Would slay the Child!" Then Joseph in quick haste
Led Child and Mother o'er the desert waste,—
Along the road of old by Israel traced.

Strange was that journeying: the peasant's song
Sounded unhomelike as they moved along
Unknown, unnoticed by the passing throng;

Twice do they mark the Nile's o'erflowing tide,
Twice mark the fertilizing stream subside,
And in meek patience God's good time abide.

There Joseph called to mind the Viceroy Saint,
That other Joseph, whose chaste self-restraint
Preserved him, like himself, from wanton taint;

Whose prudent counsels to King Pharao gave
Light from on high to ward off death and save
A nation, struck with famine, from the grave.

There Mary pondered on the Paschal Lamb,—
God, in the Burning Bush, self-named I Am,—
And Israel rescued from the land of Cham.

Two years mid strangers in a foreign land
Who nor their faith nor language understand
They wait till God from the Sun-City's strand

Shall call them back to Palestine: meanwhile,
Finding their solace in the Infant's smile,
With love and labour they the hours beguile.

What though without be foes, around distress,
God knoweth how His favourites to bless;
Where Jesus is, there is no irksomeness.

Whate'er God's Will, do thou all promptness show;
Whither He bids thee go, undoubting go;
Hereafter, why He wills it, thou shalt know.

May be He gives thee work to do at home;—
May be that He abroad would have thee roam;—
Haply thou mayst be crowned with martyrdom.

Saints have been formed amid the din of wars;
Saints have grown perfect within cloistral doors;
Saints have been nobles, craftsmen, warriors.

Thy Lord is ever-present and where'er
Thy footsteps carry thee, He guards thee there;
What is there for His sake, thou canst not dare?

Thy holocaust, no base begrudging spoil;
At home or exiled from thy native soil
Be prompt for active zeal or patient toil.

Joseph God's bidding for his guidance took,
Left Israel's plain and Cison's ancient brook,
And for the land of Cham his home forsook:

Mary, from home and country banished far,
While on her ears strange foreign accents jar,
Finds in the Will of God her guiding star:

The Son, His Throne in highest Heaven resigned,
Nine months is in His Mother's womb confined,—
Then swathed and in a narrow crib reclined;—

Pursued by Herod eager for His Blood,—
As 'mid the thorns a rose's opening bud,
He lies concealed by Nile's mysterious flood.

We are His soldiers! pledged with Him to climb
The narrow path, whate'er the place or time,
In summer's heat or frozen winter's rime.

Thrice blest are they who severing household ties,
To worldlings foolish but to Angels wise,
Serve 'neath His standard under distant skies;

Who brave the fervours of the torrid zone,
Or icy north with seas congealed to stone,
Or lands with forests unexplored o'ergrown.

In peace, where pride and fulness pamper guilt,—
In war where human blood by man is spilt,—
Lord! I will toil with Thee where'er Thou wilt;

And if times come when blinded by their hate
Men charge Thy Church with treason 'gainst the State
And unjust laws her children decimate;

We will with Jesus into exile go,
Content with Him to suffer utmost woe
And wait the end, till God the end shall show.

Soul of Christ, do Thou sanctify my soul:
Body of Christ, Thy virtue make me whole:
And Blood of Christ, my passions' thirst control.

Cleanse, Water from Christ's Side, my heart from stain:
Passion of Christ, support me in my pain:
Let me not call on Thee, dear Lord, in vain.

Within Thy Sacred Wounds Thy servant hide:
Let nothing ever part me from Thy Side:
Defend me from the foe's malignant pride.

Call me what time my passing bell shall toll,
And bid me, with Thy Saints, reach Thee my goal,
To praise Thee while for aye the ages roll.

CANTO 10.

THE RETURN FROM EGYPT.

Herod may sleep in peace: his crown is safe;
He holds secure the abdicated waif;
None now remains his jealous wrath to chafe.

'Twas shrewdly done! 'Twas wisdom to efface
Each sprouting scion of King David's race,
Who might pretend to reign in Herod's place.

Tyrant! That Holy Child, the Lord of Hosts,
For all thy crafty schemes and empty boasts,
Lives yet, secure in far-off Misraim's coasts.

And thou, base founder of a bastard line,
Whose sons were treated harder than thy swine,
How thinkest thou to 'scape the wrath Divine?

The hearts of mothers for their infants riven!
The blood of kindred to the shambles driven!
How canst thou hope to have thy crimes forgiven?

Whilst thou for death the Infant Christ hast sought,
Death and God's judgment thou hast set at nought,
And thy poor soul to direst peril brought.

Snapped the bright cord and crushed the golden bowl,
The pit is yawning to engulf thy soul!
Are there no terrors can thy lust control?

Yet that sweet Babe, Whose Heart no rancour knows,
Prays for Its would-be murderer as It goes;
To love so great, why so great hate oppose?

Full, full of tenderness is Jesus' Heart!
Adept to exercise each winning art!
E'en Herod, an he would, might there find part!

He dies; and in his room as Ethnarch reigns
The son of Malthaca o'er Saron's plains;
O'er Juda, and Samaria's mountain chains;

Harsh and oppressive is his iron sway;
While the Trans-Jordan tract and sea-ward way
The milder rule of Antipas obey.

To Joseph in his sleep an Angel spake:
"They who would slay the Babe are dead. Awake!
And homewards to the land of Israel take

"The Mother and the Child." The Patriarch rose
In joyful haste, and roused from their repose
His Precious charge. The prudent Virgin knows

The ancient type must be fulfilled, which told
Of Rachel's first-born, who in times of old
Was by his brethren into Egypt sold:

Whither, when all his store of corn was done,
The aged Jacob, famine's straits to shun,
Came at the instance of his Viceroy son:

How when another King began to reign,
And all the first-born of the land were slain,
God led His rescued people home again.

Thus then the holy Three,—Sire, Mother, Child,—
Retrace their journey through the desert wild;—
And Angels as they go their welcome smiled.

Old scenes are greeted as they pass them by;
Their hearts with memories ever fresh beat high,
As Hebron, Bethlehem, Salem they descry.

Anxious they learn that Archelaüs reigns
With iron rule o'er Saron's fertile plains,—
O'er Juda, and Samaria's mountain chains.

But since the northern parts that seawards lay,
And those by Cison's brook in peace obey
Herod the Tetrarch's more benignant sway,

Joseph, dream-warned, conveys his loved ones down
To Nazareth's despised, secluded town,
As honoured now, as then of base renown:

Sang not the Prophet: "Banish out of sight,
Abject and struck as with the leper's blight,
Messias shall be called a Nazarite?"

And blest are they who battling with their pride,
Turn from the world's emblazonments aside,
And in Humility with Christ abide;

Who reckon at its worth the breath of fame,
Shrink from the idle lustre of a name,
And share their Master's obloquy and shame.

The truly great is he who stands esteemed
By those whose verdict is the truest deemed,—
And God may judge him best who worthless seemed;

While he who by mankind is counted great,
May be by Angels judged of no estate,
And by the Lord of Angels, reprobate.

To Thee, O God, my holocaust is made!
And at Thy Cross's foot my honour laid;
If Thou approve, what matter who upbraid?

CANTO II.

LIFE AT NAZARETH.

Of all the flowers, that, in this lonesome wild,
'Mid quickset thorns and prickly briars smiled,
None was so sweet as Mary's winsome Child!

Or e'er at night the Mother-Maid would wrap
Her darling for repose, upon her lap
He would pray God to shield from all mishap

Their home at Nazareth; and Archangels three,
The Guardians of that earthly Trinity,
Wafted those prayers across the crystal sea.

He in Whose Hand the globe is but a toy,
Is now, one lustre old, a gentle Boy,
His Virgin-Mother's all-absorbing joy.

Holy and simple, innocent and true,
Each year in wisdom, age and grace He grew
With God and man; and quick the lustres flew.

One lustre of expanding childhood sped,
Another lustre still more graces shed;
Each year a brighter halo crowned His Head.

The gentle Boy His parents' care repaid,
And He Whose breath the universe had made,
Choosing one grace above the rest, obeyed!

A ready ear to each command He lent,
He did or left undone, or came or went,
To Mary's slightest word obedient.

A look—a glance—a thought yet unexpressed,—
A wish that harboured in His Mother's breast,—
The loving Son fulfilled with eager zest.

Yet He Who Nazareth's lowly workshop trod,
Or in the garden turned the dewy sod,
Was still the uncreated Son of God!

No need for Him to con the rules of art,
To work by measured plan or pencilled chart;
Not His the pupil's but the Master's part!

Nathless,—as though in earth's primordial state,
It had not been His skill to calculate
Its elements in number, measure, weight:

As though He had not forces at His beck,
Repulsion, traction, check and countercheck
Matter to rule in each minutest speck;—

As though He had not launched heaven's astral gear
With balanced power in its swift career
Through the vast ocean of the atmosphere,

Or had not been the pristine Architect
Skilful each congruous atom to select
Which, crystallized in stars, the expanse bedecked :—

Th' Eternal Son of God, of Mary born,
Rising alert from sleep at earliest morn,
Toiled in such sort as haughty man would scorn !

He Who the myriads of His people fed
With manna from the heavenly garner shed,
Now earns with daily toil His daily bread ;

And He Whose Wisdom is the exhaustless store
Whereon the highest Angels love to pore,—
Whence Cherubim derive their heavenly lore—

With cheerful promptness and attentive air
Performs each menial act with nicest care,
As Joseph bids, to do or to forbear.

For Joseph's bidding would no 'hest devise
That could God's Will or conscience compromise ;
And so, with blind obedience, He complies.

Thus blind obedience, which the unwise malign,
Its prime exemplar finds in things divine,—
Itself, humility's unerring sign.

He knew more deftly how the wood to shape,
Without or rule or level, line or tape ;
The grain to follow, or the knot escape ;

Yet while He sojourned among mortals here
He would as He were nothing worth appear,
And seem by others' wit His course to steer.

O wonderful humility! How steep
The Infinite incline! The depth how deep!
What can poor mortals do but love and weep?

Soul of Christ, do Thou sanctify my soul:
Body of Christ, Thy virtue make me whole:
And Blood of Christ, my passions' thirst control.

Cleanse, Water from Christ's Side, my heart from stain:
Passion of Christ, support me in my pain:
Let me not call on Thee, dear Lord, in vain.

Within Thy Sacred Wounds Thy servant hide:
Let nothing ever part me from Thy Side:
Defend me from the foe's malignant pride.

Call me what time my passing bell shall toll,
And bid me, with Thy Saints, reach Thee my goal,
To praise Thee while for aye the ages roll.

CANTO 12.

THE FINDING IN THE TEMPLE.

A little cloud, no bigger than the hand,
In time may o'er the firmament expand,
And drench with driving rain the flooded land.

When Simeon in the Temple of the Lord
To Mary's arms her ransomed Child restored,
He warned the Mother of the two-edged sword

Should pierce her to the soul; from that sad hour
Albeit upheld by faith's sustaining power,
To her fond heart the heavens seemed to lower

And ever and anon there darkling spread
The menace of a thunder-cloud o'erhead,
And Mary's heart transfixed with anguish bled :

Such was the Circumcision ; such again
The flight when Rachel's Innocents were slain ;
Such, the report of Archelaüs' reign.

The Infant sorrows of Christ's tender years
Drew from His gentle Mother silent tears :
No grief like hers the grief of Jesus nears.

Nor titled king nor Ethnarch longer reigns
With show of independence o'er the plains
Of Saron ;—Juda ;—Sichem's mountain-chains :

Eleven years gone, King Herod breathed his last ;
Erewhile two years saw Archelaüs cast,
After an Ethnarchate in tumult passed,

An exile to Vienne ; Rome now no more
Judea's turbulence with patience bore,
But all her cherished rights rode roughshod o'er.

Rome to her yoke the stiff-necked people bent,
And as their Governour, contemptuous, sent
An agent of the Syrian President.

Last year, Coponius, Gentile bred and born,
Assumed the office ; and 'mid yells of scorn
Saw Rome's insignia battered down and torn.

The rabble challenged Rome in all her might ;—
While Zealots followed, for the unequal fight,
Judas of Gamala, the Gaulonite.

Aptly his watchword struck the tight-strained cord,
"No tax ! no tribute to the race abhorred !
Beside Jehovah, master none nor Lord !"

Vain are his burning words! his daring vain!
He perishes himself; and all his train
Bends down to serve resistless Rome again.

Jesus had reached, beneath His parents' roof,
The age when Solomon of old gave proof
Of wisdom in the death-doomed babe's behoof;

Now, 'twas His will, yet shrouded 'neath the screen
Of human form in simple boyhood's mien,
To have some glimpses of His Glory seen.

Twelve years in Israel the parental sway
Stood for God's Will; nor obligation lay
On earlier youth the ritual to obey

Of Moses' Law; and so for that glad space
'Twas Mary's, morn and eve, the course to trace
Of Jesus' Life, and gaze on Jesus' Face.

Oft-times she called to mind with sad presage
How as He grew in wisdom, strength and age,
Things of more world-wide moment might engage

His care and thoughts,—and then, perchance, to part
With her dear Child! Ah! like a two-edged dart
The sad foreboding pierced her to the heart.

He must to Salem: though on her there lay
No law to face the long and toilsome way
How could she home-fast without Jesus stay?

So Mary too, with Joseph's glad assent,
The eyes of Jesus beaming His content,
To Salem for the feast of Azyms went.

They seek with pious joy the pilgrim throng
That swells in numbers as it moves along,
Praising the Lord of Hosts with psalm and song.

Who could imagine that the fair-haired lad,
Prompt to accomplish all that Moses bade,
Was God's Eternal Word in Manhood clad?

God traverses in Flesh the Temple Courts,
Whither in crowds the Jewish youth resorts,
While hoary age each listening band exhorts.

Men of great note are there: Hillel the Wise,
A second Moses, with the ancient vies,
And knottiest problems of the Law unties.

First founder of the Masoretic School,
'Twas he reformed the Pasch-defining rule,
And filled nigh forty years the sacred stool

Of Israel's Senate; next, not void of pride,
Elect in Hillel's absence to preside
O'er Israel's Elders and their counsels guide,

Sat Sammai; great in fame and numbering more
Than Hillel's self of scholars: stern his lore,
But soft his life, and rich the robes he wore.

'Twas Sammai's wont with rigour to expound
The letter of the Law, while Hillel found
Ever the means to loose what Sammai bound.

Nor seldom insults and unseemly blows,—
So high at times the emulation rose,—
Witnessed the keenness of the rival foes.

There too was seen in ripening bloom of youth
The loved Ben-Uzziel, full of tenderest ruth,
By Hillel taught the lore of sacred truth;

His name, of love Divine the perfume brings,—
The birds, they say, were scorched by th' Angels' wings
That hovered round to mark his communings.

He paraphrased the Annals that contained
The Acts of those who o'er God's people reigned
And in clear terms the Hagiograph explained :

Yet lacked he frankness, for he dared not break
The seal of Daniel, who of Jesus spake
Too clearly e'en for malice to mistake.

There too was Onkelos ; 'twas he forsook
The Secret Discipline, and undertook
To vulgarise e'en Moses' Sacred Book.

Gamaliel too, the Beauty of the Law,
Was there in high repute, and round him saw
The crowds whom only words like his could draw.

And there the winsome Child of Mary stood,
Jesus, amid the grey-haired elderhood,
Like a young sapling in the moss-grown wood.

Little by little had the Holy Child,
Some hours each day with various kinsfolk whiled,
His Mother to His absence reconciled :

So when the Pasch was over, and again
The Galileans, in promiscuous train,
Retraced their way towards Esdraelon's plain,

Jesus, His Father's bidding to fulfil,
In secret and unasked His parents' will,
When all the rest set forth, remained there still.

Where is a table now for Jesus spread ?
Who in the City will provide His bed ?
Behold ! He hath not where to lay His Head !

Perchance some pious Anna saw Him roam
Amid the columns of the Sacred Dome,
And, touched with pity, led Him to her home.

Haply, unnoticed on the Temple steep,
Like Jacob erst at Luza laid to sleep,
He watched in spirit His dear Mother weep;

And when the morning's dew-bespangled tread,
(Its cheerful light o'er town and country spread,)
Woke men to dusty toil for daily bread,

After His waking thought,—a thought of prayer,—
The Son would to His Father's House repair,
Concerned about His Father's glory there.

He took His place among the Jewish youth—
The gentle, cultured, rude, untrained, uncouth—
Who for instruction in religious truth

Assembled in the Temple: all around
The catechumens sat upon the ground,
And 'mid the least esteemed was Jesus found!

The Rabbi spoke of God: I Am Who Am;
Of Israel's bondage in the land of Cham;
Of Moses, Aaron, and the Paschal Lamb.

He spoke of Sion for a time oppressed,
But destined through Messias to be blessed
When all the nations 'neath her wings should rest.

He questioned them of Silo; and the boys,
With fervid zeal and childlike, clattering noise,
Exulting in their nation's fancied joys,

Made answer that Messias should be great,
Endowed with world-wide rule and royal state:—
A King on Whom all other kings should wait;

That all the Gentiles should confess His sway;
The very Romans His command obey;
And His glad reign be everlasting day.

The lads were forward to display, each one,
His buoyant, sanguine hope; when all was done,
Had not been heard the voice of Mary's Son:—

For in the lowest place He sat so still
None thought or cared for Him, nor had the will
To ask Him for an answer, good or ill.

At last the Rabbi, in a kindly strain,
Asked the young silent Stranger to explain
How, set on David's throne, the Christ should reign.

"He shall be great," He said, "and Lord supreme;
And endless ages while they onward stream
Shall own the mercies from His brow that beam."

The Rabbi marked with observation keen
The unobtrusive yet engaging mien
Of Mary's Son, the strange young Nazarene.

He praised the answer; then, the theme begun,
Tears glistening in the eyes of Mary's Son,
Thus He continued it, the Holy One:

"Silo shall save the poor, Himself a King;
Beneath His sway shall peace and justice spring;
The Isles and Tharsis shall their tribute bring.

"But," asked the Holy Child, "what means the Seer
When he describes His aspect sad and drear:
A Man of grief, with none at hand to cheer?"

"He means Ben-Joseph, Child;" the Rabbi said;
"Ben-Joseph hath not where to lay his head;
Ben-David in the dust His foes shall tread."

"And yet Isaias," modestly replied
The Son of Mary, "speaks of Him Who died,
As through His very sufferings glorified."

So spake the Child, the Heir of Juda's tribe ;
And, hushed at last each stripling's boyish gibe,
He riveted each Rabbi, Priest and Scribe.

Haply He mindeth them how Daniel speaks :
Counts up the tale exact of seventy weeks,
And so concludes : "The world its Saviour seeks ;

"All nations are expectant : not a clime
But feels the dawning of the gracious time
When justice shall prevail o'er sin and crime :"—

And peradventure He went on to show
How Magi from the East, twelve years ago,
Had followed a strange star's mysterious glow ;

How all Jerusalem was moved : the King,
Herod, was troubled sore to hear them bring
Tidings that sounded like a menacing :

And how the priests of the Most High unrolled
The sacred parchments which the course unfold
Of Silo's life and acts ;—wherein 'twas told

From Bethl'em-Ephrata should spring the Stem,
The promised Seed of David, Abraham, Sem,
Predestined Heir of Juda's diadem.

Where Mary's Child that nightfall sought repose
Is not recorded ; haply one of those
Who wondering heard Him, pitiful bestows

Lodging and needful food, and wins the grace
Twice ten years after, to behold His face,
And hail Him King, of faithful Abraham's race.

May be that Nicodemus was His host,
And, for his charity, the Holy Ghost
Whispered that he of harbouring Christ might boast.

Arimathea's Joseph would be there,
But little dreamed, some time 'twill be his care
That Child, Adult, to his own tomb to bear.

Annas, the proud High-Priest, stalks scowling by,
While the boy Caiphas, with envious eye,
Lowers on the Victim he will doom to die.

Next day, when restful night its course had run,
Hies to His Father's house sweet Mary's Son,
And asks God's blessing on the day begun:

And they who yestreen heard Him undertake
To prove that Christ should suffer for man's sake;
Who heard Him speak as never Child yet spake,—

Again the wondrous Child, as yestreen, found
Seated in child-like fashion on the ground
With Doctors, Scribes and Priests encompassed round.

Now with a note of warning in His tone,
He hints how hearts are by the touchstone shown,
How pride may fail God's Providence to own;

How Abraham's sons may fail to be his seed;
How in God's oracles it stands decreed
That e'en the Gentiles shall thro' Christ be freed;

How God, tho' present and by Saints adored,
May be by learning, wealth and rank ignored,
And Israel even may reject their Lord!

Oh! how her heart beat high as, entering then
The sacred house, there came to Mary's ken
His Form,—the Loved One of the sons of men!

Yet did she, for a space, tho' loth, restrain
Her ardent love, nor break the listening chain
Circling her Lost One, three days sought in vain.

At last she folds her Darling to her breast,
And, sweet remonstrance in her eyes expressed,
Tells Him how sorrowful had been their quest.

She speaks, with deep emotion tremulous:
"Why hast Thou, O my Son, dealt so with us?
Three days we've sought Thee! O why leave us thus?"

And He replies, returning her caress:
"How did ye seek Me? I, as you confess,
Must take to heart My Father's business."

The Mother, in the ways of God adept,
Deep in her heart each word of Jesus kept,
And, prescient of the future, silent wept.

E'en so, though God hath sanctioned earthly ties,
The tie of man to God doth higher rise,
And claims of dearest bonds the sacrifice.

The tenderest Heart that ever beat hath taught
That there are times when love of God is bought
By counting parents, brethren, spouse, as nought.

We cannot err, obeying Jesus' voice;
What pleasured Christ, Christ's servants will rejoice;
What Jesus chose must be the happiest choice!

Soul of Christ, do Thou sanctify my soul:
Body of Christ, Thy virtue make me whole:
And Blood of Christ, my passions' thirst control.

Cleanse, Water from Christ's Side, my heart from stain:
Passion of Christ, support me in my pain:
Let me not call on Thee, dear Lord, in vain.

Within Thy Sacred Wounds Thy servant hide:
Let nothing ever part me from Thy Side:
Defend me from the foe's malignant pride.

Call me what time my passing bell shall toll,
And bid me, with Thy Saints, reach Thee my goal,
To praise Thee while for aye the ages roll.

CANTO 13.

THE TWO STANDARDS.

Christ marshals His elect to save the world,—
Around His Standard see His banner curled;—
How shall we read its blazon when unfurled?

The prince of darkness and his rebel crew
Have their device and their escutcheon too;—
What marks the traitor host and what the true?

We learn from Christ, Whose wisdom is our guide,
The badge that symbolizes either side,—
Humility, the one; the other, Pride.

Christ is our Leader; we have seen Him born
Humble and poor on the first Christmas morn
And reared a Nazarene, the proud man's scorn;—

'Tis Christ has called us,—we have heard His voice
And His example we have made our choice,—
With Him to suffer and with Him rejoice;

We must like Him be humble,—even so!
'Tis then our wisdom above all to know
How Christ's Humility in us may grow.

Beware deceit! There's nought upright or fair
In him who rules the powers of the air
And schemes astute the souls of men to snare;

Satan would lure thee from the narrow road,
The path God's faithful servants aye have strode
To reach their heavenly home, the King's abode.

Nigh Babylon,—'mid fire and smoke his chair,—
Hideous in form and frenzied by despair
He calls his myrmidons around him there.

Hoarse he harangues them on the burning plain
And eggs them on to labour might and main
To stamp on each man's soul the brand of Cain :—

"Ye down-crushed demons, hating God and man!
Each hating each with all the hate he can!
Accursed and cursing, 'neath the Strong One's ban!

"Hate binds and seals our compact,—hate of God!
He has demeaned Himself and basely trod
The path that groveling things, called human, plod;

"He would have men from pomp and riches fly
And you must out-manœuvre Him, and I
Will tell you how your engines best to ply.

"Pride was your bane: make then yon wretches proud:
Mingle unseen among the human crowd
And whisper in men's ears,—not loud,—not loud;—

"Whisper such trifles as the senses charm,
That startle not the conscience nor alarm,—
So that men say of them, 'Oh! there's no harm!'

"Whisper,—so low,—insinuate by stealth,—
What harm can possibly be found in wealth?
Nay, sure, 'tis good,—like beauty, learning, health.

"With riches men may aid the poor man's store,
(Not that they'll do it, mind, a whit the more,)
Build Hospitals and Churches by the score!

"Men thus cajoled to court the glittering prize
By trade or speculation or demise
Will make of their own souls a merchandise:

"Men will through love of money pawn their honour,
Defraud an heiress, then heap scorn upon her,
And as a robe at will or doff or don her.

"And when the new man's purse with gold is lined
What fawning adulation shall he find
His home-spun wit and common-sense to blind!

"The awe-struck poor shall stand agape with fear;
Nobles shall treat him like a fellow-peer;
E'en kings will stoop to flatter while they sneer.

"So money leads to honour; honour then
Lifts the fool's head above his fellow-men
And man from Christ reclaimed is ours again!

"As for religious—so-called—men, take care!
They of 'no harm in doing' will beware,—
'No harm in leaving out' will be their snare:

"'What harm to leave out things where there's no sin?
Or to dispense with rule and discipline?
And why with squeamish fear let scruples in?

"'What harm to shun humiliations?' So,
They shall the bulwark of their state forego,
And ye shall drag them to your hell below!

"Go and avenge yourselves! ye, demons, go!
Away, Christ's Kingdom sap and overthrow
And fool His vassals back to sin and woe!

"Go! and delude each human thing in turn!
Go! and with all the fires of vengeance burn!
Go! and with sheaves of human souls return!"

While Satan 'mid the smoke of Babylon
Goads on his minions, all and one by one,
How fares it with the King's Incarnate Son?

Lo! within sight of Salem's hallowed towers,
In the smooth grassy mead besprent with flowers,
Flushed into green by vernal sun-lit showers,

Of winning aspect and attractive mien,
His accent gentle and His Brow serene,
Jesus, the Leader of God's Hosts, is seen.

Assembled on the undulating sward
His faithful vassals listen to their Lord,—
All perfect peace without one jarring chord:

And these the counsels He commends to each:—
"Simple and unaffected be your speech,—
As I teach you so you shall others teach.

"Bid men of soft luxurious ease beware,—
Of poison lurking 'neath the petals fair
Of treacherous flowers, and with studious care

"Denounce the love of money,—bid men think
Of Dives' fate and from the glamour shrink
As from some beetling cliff's sight-dazzling brink."

Woe to the rich! 'Twould seem that all mankind
Are leagued together rich men's souls to blind
And hide from them the wrath that looms behind.

Blest are the poor and blest the poor man's ways!
Seeking nor worldly glare nor human praise
He spends unknown to men his peaceful days:

To him his God is all in all; God's care
Shields him from overt force and secret snare,—
And all the ills that Satan's arts prepare.

No sad misgivings harass him for fear
He forfeit riches that he holds too dear,
Or miss the promise of a proud career.

Ye happy poor! who nought and all possess!
Made like your Master, cheered by His caress,
Ye taste on earth how God His Saints can bless.

Peace and contentment in your bosoms reign,
True happiness on earth comes in their train,
And in the world to come eternal gain!

Have then the rich no hope? Must they despair?
Are all rich men predestinate to wear
The badge of Dives and his torments share?

Nay! though the poor in deed are chiefly blest,
Oh! let not men of wealth renounce the quest,
For rich men too may find in God their rest.

Though, as befits their rank, superbly dressed
Saint Cecily may wear a sack-cloth vest,—
A hair-shirt chafe the great Saint Thomas' breast.

But if, mistrusting self, thy courage faints
Before the hero-forms that history paints
Of canonized and consummated Saints,

A humbler class there is that loveth still
Ever to choose the good and shun the ill,
Not poor in act, but poor in heart and will.

Such do not count their substance as their own,
But with an upright heart before the Throne
Will calmly meditate what cost alone

Their state requires,—what judgment He would pass
Whose Providence assigned their rank and class,—
What then remains for alms and Holy Mass.

They who begat the herald of our Lord
(So doth tradition's lore the fact record)
Received a triple crown as their reward:

One third their means procured their daily bread,
Another third the poor around them fed,
One third adorned God's House, relieved the dead.

Blest they whose hearts from greed of wealth are pure!
Whom all in vain wealth's blandishments allure;
They shall indeed the hundred-fold secure!

"Go then, my children! Lucifer has told
How souls of Christian men are bought and sold;—
How they are bartered at the price of gold!

"Go in My Name and bear the antidote!
Let not the tempter o'er his victims gloat
As tho' I heedless were and took no note.

"Unmask the stratagems of Satan's hate,
Warn Christian men to dread the golden bait,
Draw them to love and choose the poor man's state.

"Blest are the poor in spirit, for behold
At their approach God's Angels shall unfold
The gates of pearl and streets of burnished gold.

"Those sons of men are most supremely blest
Who can themselves of their own rights divest,
Like Me their Lord of all things dispossest.

"Such is the high Exemplar; ever then
Bid Christians live themselves that life again
Whereof My life was perfect specimen.

"Teach them, well-armed against smooth flattery's blight,
Honour to seek from God thro' human slight
And from contempt reap profit infinite.

"Teach them, as paramount, this truth to know,
Humility wherefrom all graces flow
Without humiliations ne'er can grow.

"Therefore are slights, contempt and human scorn,
When with calm patience by My servants borne,
Like showers and rain to fill the swelling corn.

"Have I their Lord or life or honour spared?
Have I aught better than My vassals fared?
Bright crowns are theirs as they My Cross have shared."

Eternal Lord, Who art the Lord alone,
Helped by Thy grace, Thy Majesty I own,
And lay my holocaust before Thy Throne:

Before Thy Goodness, boundless as Thy Might,
Before Thy gracious Mother, in the sight
Of all Thy Sons and Daughters, robed in white,—

I solemnly declare my wish,—my will,—
My firm resolve,—if by such purpose still
I may more perfectly the end fulfil

Of my creation, I will follow Thee
And bear all wrongs that may be laid on me;—
Affronts, upbraidings, slights shall welcome be.

I will be poor as Thou wast poor below,
At least in spirit; yea, and really so,
Wouldst Thou on me so great a boon bestow.

Such is my wish; such, Lord, my rooted will,—
Such my determinate resolve, if still
I may the better, thus, my end fulfil.

Soul of Christ, do Thou sanctify my soul:
Body of Christ, Thy virtue make me whole:
And Blood of Christ, my passions' thirst control.

Cleanse, Water from Christ's Side, my heart from stain :
Passion of Christ, support me in my pain :
Let me not call on Thee, dear Lord, in vain.

Within Thy Sacred Wounds Thy servant hide :
Let nothing ever part me from Thy Side :
Defend me from the foe's malignant pride.

Call me what time my passing bell shall toll,
And bid me, with Thy Saints, reach Thee my goal,
To praise Thee while for aye the ages roll.

CANTO 14.

THREE WAYS OF WISHING.

Men by God's grace from Satan's bondage freed
The invitation of their Lord must heed
And in Christ's footsteps tread if they would speed.

What following Christ may mean they needs must learn—
Must right from its base counterfeit discern—
Love truth ingenuous and from falsehood turn.

They must with love, what Jesus loved, embrace,
And in themselves their Master's likeness trace
His Features reproducing, grace for grace ;—

Must mark how He Who cast the precious ore
Seeks not the threshold of the rich man's door,
But while He loveth all, loves poor men more.

How He for thrice ten years in lowliest guise,
At a poor handicraftsman's bidding hies,
The plane and chisel, adze and hammer plies.

'Tis well with clear intelligence to see
That he who says, "I, Lord, will follow Thee!"
Says in effect, "I, Lord, will humble be!"

Then of supremest import 'tis to know:—
Humility, wherefrom all graces flow,
Without Humiliations ne'er can grow.

To grant this true is good; yet skills it more
Firmly to plant the pride-subduing lore
Deep in the heart, deep in its inmost core.

Many there are indeed who own its worth,
Confess its origin of heavenly birth
And brand as dangerous the goods of earth:

Many who glibly argue and dispute,
And parley of the antidotes that suit
To stanch gold's thirst,—in barren words acute:—

Yet while a wholesome dread of wealth they feign
No single effort will they make to rein
Their own base secret appetite for gain.

They, not in earnest, sing an idle song,—
They say and do not, like the silly throng
The road to ruin hood-winked borne along.

Others aware of what is right and best
But harbouring still their passion in their breast
To their own liking wisdom's counsels wrest.

E'en so a wounded man whose perilled life
Demands the succour of the surgeon's knife,
Joins with his skilful leech in wordy strife:

The knife he will not yield to, but anon
Self-ill-advised will put some unguent on
Till the last flickering spark of life hath shone.

Neither are such in earnest, for they choose,
Treating a cancer as a surface bruise,
To trifle with the life they dread to lose.

If in the goal proposed we will succeed,
We must in earnest Jesus' counsels heed,
And, with strong hand, tame wealth's unhallowed greed.

'Tis not bare wishing, but determined will,
Resolved our Master's bidding to fulfil,—
Alone can extirpate the cankerous ill.

So the wise patient whose malignant sore
Calls for an expert to cut out the core,
To the well-practised surgeon yields him o'er.

He will not parley with approved advice;
If to save life a limb must be the price,
For life's dear sake the limb he'll sacrifice.

Let us but know what God would have us do,
A humble firm resolve will bear us through,
To Jesus' counsel and example true.

As, then, humiliations are the rod
To perfect those by whom the path is trod
That leads thro' earthly trials up to God,

Who that is prudent will not welcome scorn?
And joy to see in shreds his honour torn
If Christ may only thus in him be born?

Eternal Lord, Who art the Lord alone,
Helped by Thy grace, Thy Majesty I own,
And lay my holocaust before Thy Throne.

Before Thy Goodness, boundless as Thy Might,
Before Thy gracious Mother, in the sight
Of all Thy Sons and Daughters, robed in white,—

I solemnly declare my wish,—my will,—
My firm resolve,—if by such purpose still
I may more perfectly the end fulfil

Of my creation,—I will follow Thee,
And bear all wrongs that may be laid on me;—
Affronts, upbraidings, slights shall welcome be.

I will be poor as Thou wast poor below,
At least in spirit; yea, and really so,
Wouldst Thou on me so great a boon bestow.

Such is my wish; such, Lord, my rooted will,—
Such my determinate resolve, if still
I may the better, thus, my end fulfil.

And if proud nature shrink from pain and shame,
As flesh will quiver at the scorching flame,
Thyself, O Lord, the pride of nature tame.

Yea, and though nature smart beneath the bruise,
Let not my frowardness Thy blessing lose;—
Give me the will to will what Thou dost choose.

Soul of Christ, do Thou sanctify my soul;
Body of Christ, Thy virtue make me whole;
And Blood of Christ, my passions' thirst control:

Cleanse, Water from Christ's Side, my heart from stain:
Passion of Christ, support me in my pain:
Let me not call on Thee, dear Lord, in vain.

Within Thy Sacred Wounds Thy servant hide:
Let nothing ever part me from Thy Side:
Defend me from the foe's malignant pride.

Call me what time my passing bell shall toll,
And bid me, with Thy Saints, reach Thee my goal,
To praise Thee while for aye the ages roll.

CANTO 15.

THREE KINDS OF HUMILITY.

My Master bids me follow Him, and I,
Tracing His Life from Birth to Death, descry
The Grace He loveth most,—Humility.

And when I wonder by what grace mankind
May be remoulded to their Author's mind,
Humility the alkahest I find.

The ladder's rounds that bear us to the sky,—
The steps that lead us to our Lord more nigh,—
Are acts of Meekness and Humility.

While stage by stage as wayfarers we plod;—
And step by step the heavenly road is trod,—
Humility conforms our wills to God.

What prudence can more prudent be than still
To rule our wayward fancies by His Will,—
Shun what He hates and what He loves fulfil?

Angels of old to dire rebellion stung,
Fostered by pride from envy's passion sprung,
Were down to hell from God's blest Vision flung:

And pride in man the like effect had wrought
Had not God's ruth a plea for weaklings sought,
Whom mightier natures to rebel had taught.

Therefore as ills by contraries are cured,
Christ, to obedience for our sake inured,
Humiliations to the death endured.

We then, for His dear sake repressing pride,
Will in His loved Humility abide;
Nothing shall ever part us from His Side.

Say then, what is Humility; 'twere meet
To know its features lest some counterfeit
Should our untutored wits beguile or cheat.

Humility essays man's will to school,
Making the perfect Will of God his rule,
Though knaves may deem him mad or call him fool;

And Saints, who things Divine more clearly see,
Have of Humility marked species three:
Threefold in kind, and threefold in degree.

The first, just strong enough self-will to quell
Where there is question of the pains of hell,
Ranks as condition indispensable.

This so submits the will to the All-good
As to refuse consent to aught that would
Grieve God by deadly sin's foolhardihood.

The second kind, more perfect than the first,
Shuns deadly sin as of all ills the worst;
Yet hath it not so clear its fetters burst

As to retain no craving for the things
Which, though they kill not, are thick-set with stings—
Palsying the soul with earthward hankerings.

Still, when it marks whereto those hankerings tend:—
That sin, albeit not deadly, is their end:
Not even by such fault will it offend.

Would'st comprehend the virtue of the third?
Think, by what means are men from good deterred?
And how God's creatures are to God preferred?

The joys and pains of earth direct life's rein,—
For men will sin, sin's pleasure-cup to drain,—
And men will sin, to escape the smart of pain.

Whoso his stand on the first step will take
Will not, for honour, greed, or dalliance' sake,
Presume God's Law by deadly sin to break ;

Nor will he, menaced e'en with present death,
Commit by thought, desire, or act or breath,
What God as deadly sin prohibiteth.

Who will the second, nobler kind possess
Will not for honour, gain, or soft caress,
Even by lesser sin God's law transgress ;

Nor will he, menaced e'en with present death,
Commit by thought, desire, or act or breath,
What God as cooling love prohibiteth.

But they who to the third degree ascend,
Find nought in pain to scare them from their end,
Nought in earth's joys to lure them to offend.

Christ for His friends robs sadness of its sting,—
Bids rays of hope 'mid darkest clouds to spring,—
And pain itself sweet consolation bring.

O wondrous privilege of men made free
By Christ's dear love,—set in this third degree
Of Christ's most cherished grace, Humility !

For Christ chose pain and poverty and shame,
Rejecting pleasure, worldly goods and fame,
And who love Christ indeed will choose the same.

Men seek, when tempest-tossed, the sheltered cove;—
Wealth's worshippers afar for diamonds rove ;—
Christ's friends count scorn and sorrow treasure-trove;

Through them they grow like Christ; He was despised,
Therefore by them is ignominy prized,—
Christ's liegemen by Christ's livery signalized !

Only let those who to this height attain,
Quit not the practice of the other twain,
Lest the whole fabric crumble to the plain.

Soul of Christ, do Thou sanctify my soul:
Body of Christ, Thy virtue make me whole:
And Blood of Christ, my passions' thirst control.

Cleanse, Water from Christ's Side, my heart from stain:
Passion of Christ, support me in my pain:
Let me not call on Thee, dear Lord, in vain.

Within Thy Sacred Wounds Thy servant hide:
Let nothing ever part me from Thy Side:
Defend me from the foe's malignant pride.

Call me what time my passing bell shall toll,
And bid me, with Thy Saints, reach Thee my goal,
To praise Thee while for aye the ages roll.

CANTO 16.

THE BAPTISM.

The Triune Godhead from the Empyrean Throne
Watched o'er the Word-made-Flesh to manhood grown:
To His own kindred in the Flesh unknown.

For thrice ten years the seasons came and went,
And Jesus all that time in labour spent,—
Patient, unnoticed and obedient.

But there are signs of change; six months ago
The banks that curb impetuous Jordan's flow,
Re-echoed with a voice denouncing woe

On callous sinners; to the awe-struck crowd
The herald of Messias cried aloud,—
"Ye viperous brood, beware the darkling cloud

"Now big with wrath! The Lord of Hosts in ire
Is near at hand to burn the chaff with fire!—
Do penance!—Boast not Abraham your sire;

"He who gave breath to dry and lifeless bones
Can have no need of you; behold these stones;—
In them not you, He Abraham's offspring owns.

"Behold the axe laid ready at the root!
What doth alone luxuriant foliage boot?
The fire shall burn the tree that bears not fruit!"

Men wondering said: "The tale of seventy weeks,
Whereof in Holy Writ the Prophet speaks,
Well-nigh expended its completion seeks."

They asked, "Art thou the Christ?" He straight replied,
"Not so: before His Face my face I hide,
Too great by me to have His shoe untied!

"I am the Voice announced in ancient days:
'See in the desert ye make straight His ways,—
The mountains level and the valleys raise!'

"Prepare ye for His coming! He His fan
Bears in His Hand to separate the bran,
And each man's deeds for weal or woe to scan."

The widening circles of the Baptist's fame,
As time moved on, to far-off Nazareth came,
And men in Galilee his acts proclaim.

From those around to Mary's ears it passed,
And she (the future fearfully forecast)
Of Jesus tremblingly inquired at last

Whether sad tidings were in store to hear,—
Whether the moment she had learned to fear
From aged Simeon's warning voice, drew near?

Jesus, Who knew the anguish of suspense,—
Lest the dread truth might break the o'er-wrought sense,
Annealed His Mother's soul with grace intense:

"My Mother! e'en as eighteen years ago
It was My Father's Will that thou should'st know
Grief for a time, again it will be so!"

Woe beyond Angels' power of thought oppressed
The sorrow-stricken Virgin-Mother's breast;—
But all she did was on her Son to rest

Her head and meekly breathe: "Thy Will be done!"
Jesus caressed His Mother as a son
Is wont to do; but spake not either one!

Henceforth that happy converse spent in peace,
Those loving acts of kindliness must cease,—
For Christ goes forth to work mankind's release.

As when a vast Cathedral's plan is traced,
Its lofty columns, to be firmly placed,
On deep-set, strong foundations must be based;

E'en so the mighty work to ransom man
In condescension infinite began;—
Not Michael's self the abysmal depth could scan!

It were enough to daze the Angels' ken
For God the Son to put on flesh, and then
Consort, earth's humble denizen with men:

But for our God, Who knows no ill but sin,
To near the whirlpool and be plunged therein,
Must strain the faith e'en of the Cherubin.

A leprous outcast by the world esteemed,—
To others, sinners, He a sinner seemed ;—
God-Man made sin, man's fallen race redeemed.

The call to penance rang distinct and loud
Where, by the Jordan's waters, earthwards bowed
Wept and confessed their sins a diverse crowd.

Jesus, of David's stem the promised Bud
Who, circumcised, began His Life in Blood,
Stood with the sinners by the rushing flood.

Where now the warnings of the Baptist draw
Throngs to do penance, erst those waters saw
The two great Prophets of the Ancient Law

Fulfil their earthly course : from Nebo's height
Had God revealed the Land to Moses' sight,
Promised to Israel's Seed in Abraham's right ;

And here Elias (in whose power and name
The Baptist's self, Messias' herald, came)
Was borne to heaven in the whirling flame.

Crowds from the North and South, the East and West,
Roused from their lethargy, with heaving breast
And sobs of loud lament their sins confessed ;—

Some few there were whose very depth of woe,
While Jordan's lustral waters o'er them flow,
Restrained of their hearts' grief the outward show.

Among the rest was in that concourse seen
One marked, as seemed it, by His lowly mien
Unworthiest of all, the Nazarene :

Greatness and lowliness in Him combine,
He waited to the last and gave no sign
Of that He was—Almighty and Divine !

In vain did John the Baptist humbly plead
His all-unworthiness;—that he indeed
Not to baptize but be baptized had need:

"Nay, let it be so now," the Lord replied;
"Unmarred by us let ancient truth abide,—
Let Prophecy and Type be verified."

And so he suffered Him,—but who hath known
The All-wise Searcher of men's hearts disown
The seed that in Humility is sown?

Behold the heavens were opened and a Dove
On Jesus came descending from above—
Meet emblem of the Eternal Father's Love;

A Voice from Heaven proclaimed His Filial right:
Proving the Self-abased, the Lord of Might,—
"Thou art My Son in Whom I take delight!"

As God-made-Man the path of Justice showed,
See that thou choose, O man, the self-same road—
Humility, that wings to God's abode.

CANTO 17.

THE TEMPTATION.

By fasting and by prayer th' Eternal Son
Inaugurates, while forty days are run,
The work Divine by Jordan's stream begun.

Prophet! His theme is Justice' strict award,—
Priest! By His Death is man to God restored,—
King! O'er His Church He reigns sole Sovereign Lord.

Surely a plan so great must needs begin
In One Who, from the first exempt from sin,
Was pure till death as in His origin.

Wouldst thou, O man, in Him thy birthright keep,—
Wouldst thou ascend with Him the heavenly steep,—
See that thou lay foundations broad and deep.

See that, the rankness of the flesh subdued,
Against self-love with ceaseless fortitude,
Thou constant to the end maintain the feud.

Nor is this all;—the spirit helpless lies,
Tho' loosed by penance from terrestrial ties,
Unless on wings of prayer it heavenward flies.

Doth not our Prophet, Priest and King prepare
His Human Soul by rigid fast and prayer
Pain, slights, dishonour and contempt to bear?

Led by the Spirit He confronts a fast
Surpassing man's endurance, till at last
A space of forty days and nights is passed.

Far from the haunts of men, no pleasant sound
Of voice is heard,—the wild beasts prowl around,—
His seat, a rock,—His couch, the naked ground!

He forty weary nights and forty days
His Life and Death with calm presage surveys
And for their fruit in man's redemption prays.

As Moses on the Mount the pattern scanned
Of Ark and Temple, now Messias planned
The Masterpiece of His Almighty Hand:

He traced His Church through her beleaguered state;
How offering truth to all—to small and great—
She like Himself not love should reap but hate.

He marked how far brute force should hinder right,—
How far corruption spread its withering blight,—
How far unfaith gain vantage in the fight.

The storm of persecution He forecast;
Saw Peter's bark tossed wildly by the blast,
But in His Name triumphant at the last.

He traced His Church through centuries of pain,—
And then through centuries of glorious reign,—
Then schism rampant and untruth again:—

Then looking onwards o'er the bourn of sense
He saw her free from scandal and offence,
Safe in the Arms of God's Omnipotence.

Revolving thus His Kingdom's trial-state
He sat, reduced to hunger's utmost strait,
All pale, enfeebled and emaciate.

Anon, across the waste so lone and weird
Is heard a traveller's footstep; as he neared
The spot where Jesus rested, he appeared

Struck with amazement; then with deep incline
Of cringing body but accurst design,
Prepared him to accost the Man Divine.

The semblance of a way-farer he bore,—
A pilgrim's staff and gaberdine he wore,
As of that number who not long before

Had heard the Baptist's warnings and received
His purifying rite. As one who grieved
To see a fellow-man of all bereaved,

He asked Him how He fared, concerned to say
He carried nought His failing strength to stay;—
No draught wherewith He might His thirst allay.

Then looking nearer, with well-feigned surprise,
"Why! Thou art He Whom late I saw," he cries,—
"Whom I beheld Ben-Zachary baptize!

"Why! Thou art He o'er Whom the skies above
Were opened, and the likeness of a dove
Came hovering down to mark Thy Father's love!

"Why! Thou art He Whose supernatural might
A Voice from Heaven attested, and Thy right
To Sonship as Thy Father's chief delight!

"And hast Thou heedless then so soon forgot
The heavenly vision, that Thou usest not
The power Thou hast to prove Thy wondrous lot?

"Since Thou art Son of God, Thy power display,
For with fair show of reason men will say
Thou art self-murderer, if Thou delay!

"Bid that these stones be changed! sure, they will heed
Thy Voice if thou be Son of God indeed,
And thus made bread will satisfy Thy need."

He spoke perfidious, and his parley done,
The false and smooth-tongued fiend of Babylon
A stone presented to the Holy One.

Jesus with meek forbearance put aside
The tempter's treacherous offer and replied:
"Not so, 'tis Mine My Father's Will to bide;

"It was My Father's Spirit led Me here,—
What hap soe'er befall Me, He is near,—
How tempt Me with His Will to interfere?

"My meat and drink it is to do His Will,—'
When things seem hardest to be trustful still,
And so His all-wise purposes fulfil.

"Take thou the Sacred Book and thou shalt read:—
'The Words that from the Mouth of God proceed
(Not bread alone) life-giving are indeed.'"

Thus in return the bold arch-hypocrite:
"Thou dost right well to appeal to Holy Writ,
The beacon-flame by God's own Spirit lit;

"And Thou rememberest how the Royal Seer,
The son of Jesse, sings of Thy career,—
How all mankind Thy doctrine shall revere;

"The time is ripe Thy Mission to proclaim,
To publish to mankind Thy Father's Name,
And spread throughout the world Messias' fame.

"Behold the Temple's turret skywards shoot
Like the tall pine straight upwards from its root;
Lo, in the court below, vast numbers moot

"The question of Messias' coming reign;
How Israel's sons shall win their own again—
How captive Rome shall swell Messias' train;

"How God will free His people from the yoke
Of foreign masters and at length revoke
The curse His Prophets on their fathers spoke.

"They crowded to the Jordan; there they heard
From John's own lips that they indeed had erred
In deeming him Messias; but he stirred

"Their hearts within them as he spoke of One
Set in their midst for Whom is now begun
A marvellous career,—to Whom is done

"Worship by every faithful heart and true,—
The Mighty One; the latchet of Whose shoe
He was not worthy prostrate to undo.

"See! Thou shalt soar aloft with eager flight,
And swift, adventuring the dizzy height,
On the great Temple's pinnacle alight."

The very Angels in amazement gasp
To see the Evil One Christ's Body clasp
And to the Temple bear It in his grasp.

"Down," said he, "through mid-air majestic float,
And since Thou dost so aptly Scripture quote,
Recall to mind the words King David wrote;—

"'What, though unnumbered ills around alarm?—
God hath beneath Thee stretched His Angels' arm,—
Lest dashed against a stone Thy foot take harm:'

"Down then in state sublime pass through the air,—
Angels Thy Person in their arms shall bear
And ward off ill by their obsequious care."

He spoke perfidious; then, his parley done:
"Again it written stands," replied the Son,
'Thou shalt not tempt thy God, the Holy One.'"

Baffled once more the disappointed fiend
(Who for success hath aye on flattery leaned)
Again behind fair words his malice screened:

"Rabbi, I frankly own I counselled wrong
Bidding Thee, poised in air, amaze the throng
With wonderment as Thou wouldst float along:

"In fine, how few had witnessed Thy descent,
How few believed by dint of wonderment,
Whilst Thou on sway o'er all the world art bent!

"Thy Father's glory is Thy one great aim;
For this the Dove on Thee descending came;—
I know Thy zeal,—its all-consuming flame!

"Grand is Thy mission in the Angels' eyes!
Worthy the Son of God Thine enterprise!
Higher than earthly, it transcends the skies!

"There is a mountain seems the sky to prop—
So high, no footsteps brush the dews that drop
Condensed upon it; from its aery top

"The earth beneath, which human millions tread,
Shall with its millions lie before Thee spread,
From the chill Pole to where swarth Moors are bred."

Again the Angels with amazement gasp
To see the Evil One Christ's Body clasp
And to the mountain bear It in his grasp.

He set Him on the loftiest mountain peak:
He seemed an easy prey, so faint, so weak,—
His strength all gone, nigh powerless to speak;

The tempter showed the vast imperial realms,
Which in their puissance like vine-girded elms
Sustained the minor states and ruled their helms.

As he described their glory and their sway,
He asked Him, was He mightier than they,
That He should dare their conquest to essay?

Nor spared the master-hypocrite to tell
How without fail the embattled hosts of hell
The serried squadrons of His foes would swell:

Besides, an He would teach, could He unlearned
Fail by the well-taught Rabbi to be spurned,—
Pre-judged or ere a hearing He had earned?

Needs must He fail: not His or wealth or rank;—
The drowning man without a friendly plank
Struggled awhile, then gave up all, and sank.

"E'en now on slenderest thread Thy life depends;
How canst Thou dream of compassing Thine ends,
Void of resources, influence and friends?

"See the whole world below Thee,—it is mine;—
Mine by good right for none my sway decline;
All to my will body and soul resign.

"All that I bid them do, anon they do,—
All I forbid their doing, they eschew,—
All who obey me not, their folly rue!

"And I can give to all I will, a share;
Nay, I can give Thee all, for I can spare
All that may serve to aid Thy purpose there.

"Only be Thou my vassal—I, Thy Lord;
Thou to win boundless empire wield the sword;
I as Thy rightful suzerain adored!"

The tempter ceased,—and briefly thus the Son:—
"Written it stands: 'To God be worship done,—
To Him alone:' Avaunt, unholy one!"

Baffled on every point the tempter fled;
Good Angels came and ministered instead
And with celestial food their Master fed.

CANTO 18.

THE CALL OF THE APOSTLES.

The Christian soldier for his Master's sake
The sacrifice of his whole life will make,
Confront the knife, the halter and the stake.

'Tis not enough,—some in still nobler wise
Wishful their loyalty to signalize,
Beneath Christ's Standard court a nobler prize.

They not content with winning Heaven alone,
Must needs have comrades,—comrades of their own
To swell their Master's praise, before God's throne.

God at the first for man's dear sake did call
Out of blank chaos this terrestrial ball
And the vast boundless circumambient All.

Through Him, Who being God, should put on Man
The fiat from the Unbegotten ran,
And so with man in view, God's work began.

Earth's garniture,—the herbage yielding seed,—
The kine beside the flowing streams that feed,—
God made them all to satisfy man's need.

Nor only in creation's works so fair
Had God regard to man, but still more there
Where God-made-Man God's Honour would repair.

God simply spoke the word,—God's Finger span
Creation's fabric, but to rescue man
God's out-stretched Arm wrought all that Godhead can:

And in the wondrous strife 'twixt wrong and right,
'Twixt good and evil waged, the Infinite
Stooped to make man His partner in the fight.

First and the foremost on the Prince's side,
Mother of God, the Holy Spirit's Bride,
And, next her Son, in sorrow's furnace tried,

A second Eve more blessed than the first,
Sweet Mary stood,—sweet Mary Maid who nursed
That Second Adam, Who man's doom reversed.

Who else shall with the Mother aid the Son?
By whom at home be feats of prowess done?
By whom abroad shall fields for Christ be won?

And when the Prince's earthly course is sped,
By whom shall widowed Christendom be led?
Who be Christ's Vicar, and His Church's head?

The frauds of Lucifer reduced to nought,—
The banquet ended by the Angels brought,—
Jesus anew the banks of Jordan sought.

Him, when the Baptist afar off descried,
While his own greatness John was fain to hide,
He in these words His Master magnified:—

"I am the Voice that crieth in the wold!
See Him of Whom I testified;—behold
The Spotless Lamb of God, ordained of old!

"I am the twilight; He, the noontide ray:
On me, the office of a herald lay—
His harbinger Who takes earth's sin away.

"True, He comes after me; but in God's Word,
As from the Prophets' lips hath aye been heard,
He was before me,—is to me preferred.

"I knew Him not, yet 'twas to make Him known
That I baptized,—that so by me foreshewn
Him as Messias Abraham's sons might own.

"He is the Bridegroom,—I, the Bridegroom's friend:—
On Him, baptized, I saw a Dove descend
And o'er Him as in love Its wings extend:

"It was the Spirit; and I heard a voice;
'This is My Son,—let all the earth rejoice
With Me in Him,—the First-born of My choice.'

"He shall lift up the lowly from the mire,
And, to exalt them to the Angelic Choir,
Baptize them with the Holy Ghost and fire."

The following day, the Baptist as before,
To Andrew and another, witness bore
Of Jesus as the Lamb foretold of yore:

"Behold the Lamb of God," he cried, "behold
Him of Whom David and the Prophets told,
At once the Lamb and Shepherd of the fold!"

The two disciples the like impulse share,—
They hear with leaping hearts nor lingering there,
To Jesus at their master's word repair.

"What seek ye, children?" Thus that gentle voice
(Whose gracious tones both earth and Heaven rejoice)
Welcomed the first-fruits of His Father's choice.

Confused and timorous they found nought to say,
Yet stammering asked, "Where, Rabbi, dost Thou stay?"
"Come ye and see," He said; and led the way.

They came, and all that day with Him abode,
And, while their wondering hearts within them glowed,
Drank in the words that from His wisdom flowed.

Jesus meanwhile with prescience sure forecast
The moulding of His Church, decreed to last
Till all that changes in this world hath passed.

Himself was all in all; the fulness He
Of the Eternal's pre-ordained decree,—
Rock, Keystone, Head, Good Shepherd, branching Tree.

But to what heights soe'er our thoughts may climb
The heavenly finds its counterpart in time,
And earthly mirrors picture the sublime.

Himself while visible on earth explained
The mysteries in Holy Faith contained,
And by His Word the sin-bound soul unchained;

But forasmuch as He the end foresaw,
When in obedience to nature's law
He should Himself from human sight withdraw,

He chose a Rock with His own Likeness sealed;
A Vicar, such authority to wield
As all the world should loving homage yield:

He chose a Shepherd His own staff to bear;
A King, the sacred triple crown to wear;
And all mankind committed to his care.

So, to complete the work He had begun,
He said to Simon: "Thou art Jona's son:
Thy name be Rock, by faith's confession won!

"Be to My Church her underlying Rock;
Strong to withstand the world's confederate shock,—
The gates of hell and Satan's power to mock."

This done, no longer will He have adjourned
The sight for which His filial spirit yearned;
So homewards, where His Mother was, He turned.

And as through Galilee the way He led,
He, finding Philip of Bethsaida, said:
"Follow thou Me!" He heard, then straightway sped

To seek Nathanael, and inspired with zeal
Such as new converts in their fervour feel—
Would his glad tidings to his friend reveal.

"Our ears have heard," he cried, "our eyes have seen
Him, upon Whom the Law and Prophets lean—
Jesus, of Joseph, called the Nazarene!"

To Him an answer, not exempt from scorn
Returned Nathanael; "What! a Nazareth-born!
Good, hoped from Nazareth, were a hope forlorn!"

Then Philip to his friend: "Nay, come with me,
I will conduct thee to Him: thou shalt see
With thine own eyes, and judge how this may be."

At once the friends to Jesus' Presence speed,
And hear Him speak as One the thoughts could read,
"Behold a guileless Israelite indeed!"

Amazed Nathanael answered: "Who art Thou
Who speakest thus, though strange to me, I trow?
Whence know'st Thou me, unseen by Thee till now?

"Or e'er," the Master said, "thy friend addressed thee,
While 'neath the fig-tree thou didst sit to rest thee,
My eye beheld thee, while My Spirit blessed thee."

"Rabbi!" he cried, as all misgivings fly,
"Thou art indeed the Son of God Most High—
The King of Israel!" Jesus in reply

The future to His proselyte foretold:
"Thou shalt see greater things than these; behold,
As Jacob rapt God's Angels saw of old

"Ascending and descending; thou e'en so
'Twixt earth and heaven shalt watch the Angels go
And to the Son of Man their homage show."

Graces preserved from unthrift and abuse,
Put out to interest by industrious use,
Graces of higher kind and worth induce;

So they who on Tiberias' Lake, on board
Their fishing-boats, heard Jesus and adored,
From friends became disciples of the Lord:

First, friends; disciples, next; then, closer still
Apostles, faithful unto death, they will
No less His counsels than commands fulfil.

To them who with self-sacrifice begin,
He giveth virtue other souls to win,
And rescue sinners from the ban of sin:

Higher and higher still, at Jesus' call,—
Minded to follow Him whate'er befall,—
They quit their nets, their ships, their homes, their all!

Nor did the world's Redeemer choose the great,
On whom pride's slaves obsequiously wait,
Foundations of the Church, His heaven-born State:—

His Arm hath marvels wrought; the proud man's mind
With vain conceit elated, He strikes blind:
Puts down the mighty, and exalts the hind.

He feeds the hungry, fills him with good things;
Confounds the rich, frustrates his reckonings,
And all his worldly pomp to nothing brings.

Lo, four poor fishers from Genesareth's strand,
Of rustic speech, of rough and horny hand;—
The first instalment of the Apostles' band;

And next, an agent of Rome's hated race
(His very calling Israel's sore disgrace)
Among the chosen Twelve receives a place.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat;
Bowed Emperors, Kings and Queens at poor men's feet;
Highest and lowest in His Presence meet!

Strange Court! and in that Court strange customs seen!
For all that dazzles men with tinsel-sheen
To Angels' eyes shows valueless and mean.

Jesus the Nazarene is King of kings!
And while the world is blind to heavenly things,
Faith with adoring love its homage brings.

Peter the Fisherman, is honoured more
Than all earth's mighty ones renowned of yore,—
More than all heroes of historic lore!

Twelve men in science of the schools unlearned,
By Jewish scribe and Gentile sophist spurned,
Have through Christ's grace a glorious aureole earned.

Blest are the poor! They who to Heaven aspire,
Ever by stooping lower rise the higher,
And win bright crowns among the Empyrean Choir.

Blest they who on earth's riches lay no store;
For them wide open stands Heaven's golden door,
And they as kings shall tread its sapphire floor!

Soul of Christ, do Thou sanctify my soul:
Body of Christ, Thy virtue make me whole:
And Blood of Christ, my passions' thirst control.

Cleanse, Water from Christ's Side, my heart from stain:
Passion of Christ, support me in my pain:
Let me not call on Thee, dear Lord, in vain.

Within Thy Sacred Wounds Thy servant hide:
Let nothing ever part me from Thy Side:
Defend me from the foe's malignant pride.

Call me what time my passing bell shall toll,
And bid me, with Thy Saints, reach Thee my goal,
To praise Thee while for aye the ages roll.

CANTO 19.

THE MARRIAGE AT CANA.

How shall our Lord His destined Empire gain?
He is escorted by no royal train,—
No warlike jousts inaugurate His reign.

How to His friends shall He His glory show?
How give His faithful followers to know
His power in heaven above, on earth below?

The ancient Seers His future advent told,—
Now will He prove by wonders manifold
He is indeed the Christ announced of old.

Such trenchant proof His Wisdom shall devise
When, to His foes' amazement and surprise,
He from the Tomb death's conqueror shall rise:

Meanwhile, with lesser proofs of power Divine
There shall, now here, now there, some wondrous sign,
Some ray of Godhead, through His Manhood shine.

God, at Whose bidding times and seasons speed,
Had in His Providence the hour decreed
Nature should Jesus own her Lord indeed.

That hour had not yet struck when, Cana, thou
Didst see the youthful couple plight their vow
And for the nuptial blessing lowly bow.

Our Lord to that dear home His steps had turned
Where thirty years He had obedience learned,
Towards which, when absent, aye His Spirit yearned:

And there when Jesus and His Mother met,
The pain of absence they might well forget
And merge in present joy all past regret.

But doubtless, as the Mother gazed upon
Her longed-for Son, emaciate and wan,
His Godhead to her ken more brightly shone.

She marked the dawning of the day, when grace
Should the attainder of mankind efface,
And free from Satan's chains the human race;

When she herself, in whom Eve's curse should cease
Shall have her portion too in man's release
As coadjutrice to the Prince of Peace.

A marriage-feast at Cana! Mary there
Gladly does honour to the youthful pair,
And Jesus too is prompt His part to bear.

Nathanael, born at Cana, is a guest
By right of common township; while the rest,
As Jesus' friends, are welcomed with the best.

But ere the banquet ended, one by one
The servers whisper: "Lo! the wine is done!"
And Mary tells the failure to her Son.

She knew His time was near,—His love how strong;—
Haply He might, 'mid banqueting and song
Exert His Power amid the wedding throng.

"They have no wine!" The answer Jesus gave,
That sounds to shallow ears as censure grave,
From Israel's Annals shall its import crave.

"My hour is not yet come!" Say then, can He,
By acquiescence in His Mother's plea,
Hasten in time His Father's fixed decree?

Yea, prayer that's fashioned by a creature's breath
May make unsaid e'en what th' Eternal saith!
Man's humble faith God's purpose altereth!

E'en though a Prophet's voice God's Will record,
Our God may yield, by suppliant faith implored,
And prayer may change the counsel of the Lord.

Such change in God the startled reason tries,
And Holy Writ when God, o'ercome, complies,
Ascribes to God the Infinite—surprise.

Instance of this the Jewish Annals tell,
When Israel, prone to murmur and rebel,
Into idolatry and riot fell:

What time the people from Jehovah strayed,
Impatient of delay, and wanton played,—
Dancing before the calf by Aaron made,—

The Lord would for His Justice' sake restrain
Moses from prayer, lest prayer His Hands might chain,
Since prayer for mercy ne'er was made in vain.

Yet Moses, God knew well, would surely plead,
As aye had been his wont, for Abraham's seed;
And God as surely would His servant heed!

When Justice therefore waves the avenging brand,
Moses the Meek, will mediating stand,
And will with prayer restrain Jehovah's Hand!

And lo! the power of prayer o'er God is shown
In words that speak surprise: "Let Me alone!
Let Israel's downfall Israel's crime atone!

"What have I, Moses, say, to do with thee?
Wouldst thou, a creature, cancel Heaven's decree?
Wouldst thou against My Will prefer thy plea?"

Yet Moses would not in his suit forbear!—
Indeed, 'twas God Himself inspired his prayer;
Moses prevails, and God is glad to spare!

E'en so when Jesus was content to wait
For His first wonder the appointed date,
His Mother would that hour anticipate:

Therefore, when she the lack of wine had shown,
He spake, as tho' surprised;—"Let Me alone!
'Tis not yet time My glory to make known."

He called her by a title which of yore
Liege subjects gave to queens;—tho' evermore
Unfaith will turn to dross the purest ore.

"What have I," He pursued, "to do with thee?
Wouldst thou, a creature, cancel God's decree?
And 'gainst My Father's Will prefer thy plea?"

Yet Mary would not in her suit forbear;—
Indeed, 'twas God Himself inspired her prayer;
And she prevails; as she doth ever fare:

And as she knew the suit that she preferred
By Him Who aye obeyed her would be heard,
She bade the servers wait upon His Word.

And He, Who at the first averse did seem,
Now bade the servers pour the limpid stream
And fill the vessels to the lip supreme.

Then Jesus said: "To him who fills the chair
Of foremost honour, from the vessels bear."
He drank, and when he found beyond compare

The wondrous wine, astonished he addressed
The bridegroom thus: "By most, the wine that's best
Is at the outset offered to the guest,—

"But thou hast kept the good till last." Alone
The servers knew the truth. From them 'twas known,
And Jesus' followers Jesus' glory own.

CANTO 20.

THE SELLERS IN THE TEMPLE.

Pale water blushing at its Lord's behest,
What time He sat at Cana's feast a guest,
The Power Divine of Jesus stands confessed.

Meanwhile the Pasch draws nigh and crowds ascend
From all the coasts of Palestine and bend
Their steps towards Salem,—there the Feast to spend.

They throng the city, room is none to spare;
They throng the Vale of Josaphat, and there
Tents scantly shield them from the midnight air.

But Jesus for His Father's rights concerned, [turned,
Straight towards His Father's House His footsteps
While fervent zeal within His bosom burned:

Ent'ring the Home of sacrifice and prayer,
The golden casket towering in the air,
Mammon He found enthroned and worshipped there.

The colonnades that gird the Holy Place
Ring loud with traffic; at each column's base
Stand drovers lounging, while their comrades chase

The straggling heifers through the Temple courts:
Here bleats the sheep—loud there the sumpter snorts—
One herdsman raves, another fierce retorts:

Others less boisterous and to sight less rude
But in the greed of mammon no less crude,
Their doves or pigeons on the crowd obtrude.

Clamour and brawling everywhere around
Reach with discordant sacrilegious sound
E'en the Most Holy's solitude profound.

Nor traffic only but usurious trade
With all its venal symbols stands displayed,
And God's own House a house of change is made.

Each one who from afar the Temple sought,
The legal victims ruled by Moses bought
And his half-sicle towards the fabric brought:

The foreign coin impressed with strange device
And into current changed to pay the price,
Was sunk in worth by grasping avarice.

Who would not fiery indignation feel
At men who so with God's own House could deal?
And who hath wit to gauge Messias' zeal?

Vain seemed the hope that viperous brood to charm,—
What voice could consciences so seared alarm?
How tame such numbers with a single arm?

But lo! some secret spell the crowd subdues,
While the ungracious scene our Master views,
And scourge in hand the traffickers pursues.

He Who His people from their bonds to bring,
Could e'en with flies prevail o'er Egypt's King,
Can rule ten thousand with a scourge of string.

He chased the boisterous drovers with their herds,
Chid them with vehement indignant words
And cleared the counters of the frightened birds.

Hear Him their sordid avarice upbraid:
"This Temple for My Father's worship made,
Make not a den of thieves or house of trade!"

Then as aloft the scourge of cords He bore,
He turned the money-changers' tables o'er
And rolled the rattling coin along the floor.

Zeal, as is written, Lord, Thy Soul possessed;
Zeal, as a burning flame, consumed Thy Breast;
Alas! my zeal is lukewarm at the best:

O, fire my soul with zeal whate'er the cost;
No toils my fervour in Thy cause exhaust;
So Heaven be won, let all the world be lost!

CANTO 21.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

Upon a grassy mountain's gentle slope
Jesus spoke words of faith and love and hope;—
Wide as the world their all-embracing scope!

"Blest are the poor in spirit; for to them
As princes of the New Jerusalem,
Belongs of right the kingly diadem.

"Blest are the meek; for, by their heavenly birth,
Theirs is by right the heritage of earth,—
And pride itself at last shall own their worth.

"Blessed are the mourners who in sadness drear
Seek not for rest or consolation here;
For God Himself their sorrowing hearts shall cheer.

"Blessèd are they who thirst and hunger still
Ever for justice' sake to do God's Will;
They shall be satisfied and have their fill.

"Blest are the merciful; who hear the prayer
Of foes repentant and know how to spare;
They in their time of need shall mercy share.

"Blest are the pure of heart; for they shall see
God here by faith, from all misgivings free:
There, face to face, where clouds and shadows flee.

"Blest are the peace-makers; whose feet have trod
The path of life, with winsome brightness shod:
They shall be called, and be, the sons of God.

"Blest who for justice' sake encounter shame;
For such, made worthy of the Royal Name,
As heirs of Heaven the Angels shall proclaim."

This said, the Son of Man pursued His theme:
How all the bounteous gifts from God that stream
As holy trusts His hearers should esteem:

How they, persisting in the sacred groove
Traced by God's Hand, their talents should improve,
And see that none the ancient landmarks move:

"Hide not your light; let men behold its rays,
And glorify your Father as they gaze;—
Your single end, to serve, revere and praise!

"Think not that I am come men's hearts to draw
From due observance of the ancient Law,
Or rob it of its reverential awe.

"'Twas said of old: Thou shalt no murder do;
I bid you curb each angry passion too;
Each supercilious, scornful word eschew.

"The Law forbids each foul, adulterous deed;
I bid you crush the evil in its seed,
And check each glance that might corruption breed.

"Thou shalt not, saith the Law, profanely swear:
I bid you each unneedful oath beware;—
Let Yea and Nay their genuine meaning bear.

"Men bid you love your friend and hate your foe:
But I would have you all ill will forego
And to your bitterest rival kindness show.

"I preach no novel code that might detract
From aught that Moses bade in word or act,—
I but anew My Father's Law enact:

"And yet I give a new command: by Love,
Figured from Heaven by the mystic Dove,
Prove yourselves sons of Him Who reigns above."

Soul of Christ, do Thou sanctify my soul:
Body of Christ, Thy virtue make me whole:
And Blood of Christ, my passions' thirst control.

Cleanse, Water from Christ's Side, my heart from stain:
Passion of Christ, support me in my pain:
Let me not call on Thee, dear Lord, in vain.

Within Thy Sacred Wounds Thy servant hide:
Let nothing ever part me from Thy Side:
Defend me from the foe's malignant pride.

Call me what time my passing bell shall toll,
And bid me, with Thy Saints, reach Thee my goal,
To praise Thee while for aye the ages roll.

CANTO 22.

THE STILLING OF THE TEMPEST.

Not all whom Jesus calls His call will heed:
Some, health or earth's entanglements will plead:
Some, prompt at first, at th' earliest check recede:

Some plead their parents' needs, as though the King
Of all the earth could claim an offering,
That would mishap or scath to parents bring.

Others, to track Christ's footsteps unprepared,
Who worse Himself than birds or foxes fared,
By fear of want and poverty are scared.

Ah! we must trust our Lord! the Saints can tell
How He lifts misery from the gates of hell,—
How none, confiding in His succour, fell.

See Him, with watchings and fatigue oppressed,
Quitting the sea-board on Tiberias' west
Seek in a fishing-boat a lull of rest.

His to assuage each smart with soothing oil;
But worn out now with unremitting toil,
Behold Him, sleep-fast, on the hempen coil.

Now through the gullies of the Eastern shore
Rushed the swift hurricane's tempestuous roar,
While the mad gale the sails and rigging tore.

Bewildered and scarce knowing what they do,—
The Twelve Disciples and the affrighted crew
In vague confusion to the Master flew:

Not of deliverance or escape, they think,—
As reft of hope, on ruin's utmost brink,—
"Master, awake!" they cried: "we sink, we sink!"

Fierce rage the billows,—fierce the wild wind blows,—
The vessel creaks and labours in its throes;—
And Jesus, Ruler of the tempest, rose:

His scared disciples watched their Master rise;—
No sign of terror in His tranquil eyes;—
No sign of discomposure or surprise!

Then He by Whom the thunder-clouds are spread,—
Who rules the storm,—with gentle chiding said,
"Courage, My children!—There is nought to dread,

"O ye of little faith!" As tigers charmed
And tamed by Christ's elect, with meekness armed,
Have left the bodies of the Saints unharmed,—

So did the rolling billows, wild as they,
Seething with crested foam and showery spray,
Bound o'er the shivering bark, their easy prey,—

But He Who in His Arms the Martyrs bare,
And nerved their weakness savage beasts to dare,—
Jesus, the Lord of Heaven and earth, is there.

He looks upon the sea, and speaks His Will:
"Be calm, ye waters! and ye winds, be still!"
And winds and waves at once His Word fulfil.

A holy awe—a soul-subduing fear,—
Tranced the beholders, feeling God so near:
"Who, say, is This, the winds and waves revere?"

Ah! we must trust our God;—as Saints can tell,
He lifts the shipwrecked from the jaws of hell:
What terrors cannot trustful faith dispel!

Soul of Christ, do Thou sanctify my soul:
Body of Christ, Thy virtue make me whole:
And Blood of Christ, my passions' thirst control.

Cleanse, Water from Christ's Side, my heart from stain:
Passion of Christ, support me in my pain:
Let me not call on Thee, dear Lord, in vain.

Within Thy Sacred Wounds Thy servant hide:
Let nothing ever part me from Thy Side:
Defend me from the foe's malignant pride.

Call me what time my passing bell shall toll,
And bid me, with Thy Saints, reach Thee my goal,
To praise Thee while for aye the ages roll.

CANTO 23.

CHRIST WALKING ON THE SEA.

On the smooth table-land at Hermon's base,
Whence still the eye Tiberias' shores can trace,
Jesus has spoken words of truth and grace

To thousands, who have tracked His footsteps; some
Bring Him their sick and blind, their deaf and dumb;
Others, erst followers of the Baptist, come

Persuaded by the signs in Jesus seen,
That all His seeming weakness doth but screen
Messias' glory in the Nazarene.

With loud acclaim their echoing voices ring:
"Hosanna, Jesus! Hail to Israel's King!
God 'neath Thy Feet the hated Gentiles bring!"

But not for this He came: unmoved He viewed
The surging thousands, and His power subdued
The passions of that clamorous multitude.

The evening shades are gathering o'er the land;
Obedient to His Word, His faithful band
Take ship and seek Capharnaum's adverse strand:

And then the crowd o'ermastered by the spell
Once used the venal traffickers to quell,
Dispersed, or e'er night's shadows round them fell.

Jesus, left all alone, in prostrate prayer
Commends His labours to His Father's care,
And braces His Humanity to bear

More labours still. The sky meanwhile o'ercast—
Is big with storm,—the pelting rain pours fast,—
And waves and breakers drive before the blast :

Nor unremembered were the bark and crew,
As o'er the foaming main they helpless flew,
And fiercer and more fierce the wild winds blew.

Erst in like case, the Twelve 'mid all their fear
Had Him at least on board,—at hand—and near :
Can He, far off, their cries for succour hear ?

While thus affrighted, tempest-tossed, dismayed,
The vivid lightning, as it round them played,
Showed Him, deemed absent, present to their aid.

He walked upon the waters and He trod
The sea as it had been the grass-green sod !—
So the brute element confessed Him God !

They shriek amain ; on this their Master dear
In all His wonted gentleness draws near ;
Says, "It is I !" and banishes their fear.

"If it be Thou," the ardent Peter cried,
"Bid me come down and tread the foaming tide
And walk upon the waters by Thy side."

Anon He bade him come and Peter trod
The waves as they had been the grass-green sod ;—
The sea made indurate by Peter's God.

But when the Apostle, deafened by the sound
Of wind and waves loud menacing around,
His faith unequal to the venture found ;

Deep in the trough of billows sweeping past,—
Scared by the uproar of the whirl-wind blast,
"Master! I sink! I sink!" he cried aghast!

He cried to One Who heard him; mid the rout
Jesus remonstrant chid, His Hand stretched out,
"O thou of little faith! Why didst thou doubt?"

O how the Apostle grasped the proffered Hand!
How both were welcomed by the storm-tost band!
And lo! no sooner did the Master stand

On the ship's deck, but there was wondrous calm:
The morning breeze from eastward soft as balm
Scarce stirred the fan-leaves of the distant palm—

The palm not distant long, for lo! they flew
By other force than wind, that bore them through
The smooth green sea beneath the cloudless blue:

And as the keel the waters swiftly ploughed,
The crew, while awe-struck they around Him crowd,
"Thou art the Son of God," exclaim aloud.

No need to spread the sail or ply the oar,—
An unseen force the vessel onwards bore,
And in a moment brought them to the shore.

Soul of Christ, do Thou sanctify my soul:
Body of Christ, Thy virtue make me whole:
And Blood of Christ, my passions' thirst control.

Cleanse, Water from Christ's Side, my heart from stain:
Passion of Christ, support me in my pain:
Let me not call on Thee, dear Lord, in vain.

Within Thy Sacred Wounds Thy servant hide
Let nothing ever part me from Thy side:
Defend me from the foe's malignant pride.

Call me what time my passing bell shall toll,
And bid me, with Thy Saints, reach Thee my goal,
To praise Thee while for aye the ages roll.

CANTO 24.

THE MISSION OF THE APOSTLES.

Our God would gather all the human race
Into His Fold,—the noble and the base;—
He welcomes all to His Divine embrace;—

And men He makes co-workers in the toil,—
Through men He wrests from Lucifer his spoil,
Duped souls unloosing from the dragon's coil.

Where then the plains from Nazareth sea-ward shelve
Christ gives instruction to His favoured Twelve
How like good husbandmen the soil to delve;

How to make clearance of each noisome weed,
How drain the stagnant marsh o'ergrown with reed,
How fit the ground reclaimed for Gospel seed.

He teaches them how Satan's chains are riven,
How to the contrite heart God's grace is given,
How sinners from their guilt and pain are shriven:

He bids them through the virtue of His Name
By wondrous miracles of love proclaim
How from above their charge and mission came:

He bids them make the sick and crippled whole,
In energumens Satan's power control,
Raise up the dead, the suffering poor console.

As He their enterprise of peace unfolds,
He bids them seek, as shepherds in the wolds,
His aid Who strong and weak alike upholds.

Nor would He have their trust in God above
Retrench their prudence,—simple as the dove
But wise as serpents in their toil of love.

He bids them be content to fare no worse
Than He their Lord, and without scrip or purse
The treasures of eternal life disburse;

Those treasures on themselves so freely poured
They should—all greed of avarice abhorred—
Freely dispense as stewards of the Lord:

"Go through the hamlets on Tiberias' strand,—
Go,—take ye in the market-place your stand,—
Proclaim to all;—God's Kingdom is at hand!

"Proclaim the Rights of God! Too long estranged
Have men among God's enemies been ranged,
Their God-like freedom into bondage changed.

"Let the usurper from his throne be hurled!
Go ye, the Standard of the Cross unfurled,
Go, and prepare the conquest of the world!"

CANTO 25.

THE CONVERSION OF MAGDALEN.

Auspicious day for sinners who lament
Their evil courses! Joy with grief is blent
In the tear-fountains of the penitent.

Auspicious day indeed when Jesus came
To call, not scribes of sanctimonious fame
But guilt-scarred sinners, humbled in their shame!

Ye, heavy-laden, crushed by sin's hard toil,
Who from your fellows' scornful gaze recoil,
God comes not to condemn you but assoil.

At Naim our Lord had healed the widow's pain,
Her only son upraised to life again,
But since by deadly sin the soul is slain,—

Lo, now a mightier purpose His design!
Like the good shepherd full of love divine,
He quits the safely-folded ninety-nine

And, leaving those for whom He suffered less,
Moved to compassion by its sore distress
He seeks the lost one in the wilderness.

There was a woman, of a country town,
Dead to fair woman's heir-loom, chaste renown,
Who sought in pleasure conscience' voice to drown:

By seven evil spirits held in thrall,
Herself sin's slave, she spread her nets for all
And by her charms bewitched them to their fall.

She had known hypocrites and found it true
How a self-righteous, sanctimonious crew
Are fain themselves what they denounce, to do.

She had heard converse of the Nazarene,
How He had oft-times with a Prophet's mien
Been in dispute with learned Rabbis seen:

She heard Him lauded, and surmised Him vain,—
One of the heartless Pharisaic train,—
And so, an easy prey for her to gain.

She would go forth and in the public street,
In all her bravery and charms complete,
Jesus the Galilean Prophet meet:

She at the fitting spot would venture nigh,
Would, as in wonder fixed, arrest His eye
And all resistless conquer with a sigh!

She came; she found men hanging on His Word;
She came;—and listened;—hushed;—the Voice she heard
A strange new feeling in her bosom stirred:

She heard Him speak to men His Father's Will,
The law of love and lowliness instil,
Pity the sinner and denounce the ill:

And He Who knew that Magdalen was there,
Turned towards her once,—by accident as 'twere—
One glance of earnest, loving, pitying care.

Suffused with shame beneath His tranquil glance
She stood confounded,—powerless to advance,—
All her whole being rapt in wildering trance.

Nigh dazed,—while He to Simon's board is led,—
She to her home with eager footsteps sped
And tore the tinselled turban from her head.

The flaunting colours she had loved to don,
The trinkets in the sun that glistening shone,
Her sandaled shoon so daintily put on,

All, all she tears away, and in their place
Some coarse out-covering without form or grace,
Wrapped closely round her, hides her muffled face

Her changed demeanour soon the wonder raised
Of her yestreen companions, who amazed
Shouted in mockery—"Magdalen is crazed!"

She heard them not, nor heeded jeer nor taunt,
Or chased some ruder jest with, "Hence, avaunt!"
And fled with loathing her old sinful haunt.

Jesus watched o'er her all the while, and gave
Her woman's heart, once fickle as the wave,
The firm resolve,—the purpose strong and brave;

She will the past with a new love repair;
Only one gift of all her presents rare,
The purchase-price of pleasure, will she spare,—

That precious spikenard, destined to impart
A gloss more lustrous still by dint of art,
To tresses that enthral the love-sick heart.

Now closely veiled, from all obstruction free,
And full of hope,—was not pure love her plea?—
She sought the Guest-friend of the Pharisee.

At Simon's board,—unshod His Sacred Feet,—
But still unfreshened from the dusty heat,—
Jesus, the sinner's refuge, sat at meat.

The host, unlike his fellows who with scorn
Rejected and despised the Nazareth-born,
Welcomed our Lord; yet was his welcome shorn

Of all its graciousness, while he professed
A condescending patronage at best,
Nor gave the treatment of an honoured guest.

O how can Magdalen her zeal refrain
While to a Heart so gracious men give pain
With scant respect and ill-concealed disdain?

Ah! but her own past life, her fallen state!
Have not her crimes deserved all good men's hate?
Whose sins like hers in number, kind and weight?

With growing trustfulness and lessening fear,
And heedless of the servers' smothered jeer,
Approaching from the porch, she ventured near.

Scarce doubtful now how He Who sat at meat
Will her confiding venturesomeness treat,
Closer she draweth—close behind His Feet.

Those Sacred Feet she washeth with her tears
And is not spurned,—she banishes her fears;
And in calm peace her new-found Lord reveres.

No more incentive to the sin abhorred
By God and Blessed Spirits, now outpoured
From alabastrine vase upon the Lord,

The odorous ointment gathered by her hair
From Jesus' Sacred Feet, and hallowed there,
Breathes of the grace that makes her truly fair.

O fragrance of a soul Christ's savour made!
O beauty of a soul by Christ arrayed!
O bliss where Christ His Touch Divine hath laid!

But man may err where God discerns the right
And taking that for sooth that meets the sight
May light mistake for darkness, dark for light.

And so it now with the beholders fared;
Simon for good repute no pains had spared,
No tongue to tarnish his fair fame had dared;

Lo! where for favoured guests his board is laid
He sees a public sinner, undismayed
By presence so select, his home invade!

How does the Master suffer taint so near?
Is He bewildered by a woman's tear?
Does she impose on the unconscious Seer?

Were He a Prophet He would surely know
What kind of woman 'tis who treats Him so,—
One lost to shame; the lowest of the low!

He gives her liberty His Feet to kiss!
Doth He not take a wanton's touch amiss?
Did ever degradation equal this?

Jesus, while Simon spun the sophist thread
Of faulty argument, his meaning read,
And "I have somewhat I would tell thee," said.

"Rabbi, say on!" he answered. "There was one
With whom two townsmen had much traffic done,—
Who were his debtors. When he had begun

"To sue for payment, they upon their troth
Pleaded their want of means; the good man, loth
To treat them harshly, straight forgave them both.

"One fifty pieces, one five hundred owed:
Which of the twain the greater love bestowed
On him who to them both compassion showed?"

"The one, I trow, to whom was most forgiven."
"Thou judgest right," Christ said, "Who most is shriven,
Is by love's force to greater fervour driven."

"The bath,—the ointment,—and the friendly kiss,
Are marks of common courtesy, I wis;
Why be, my friend, in such kind acts remiss?

"She from her entering in hath kissed My Feet,
With tears refreshed them from the dusty heat,
And made them glad with spikenard's perfume sweet.

"Therefore I say to thee, her love so great
Hath grace and mercy won, that love to mate,
For lighter shriving, lighter is love's weight."

So spake He to the Pharisee, and then
He turned His loving eyes on Magdalen
And said: "Forgiven is thy sin." Again

The offended guests with indignation glare;
"How does the arrogant pretender dare
To claim in God's prerogative, a share?

"How can He sinners from their bonds release?"
He calmly said; "Let all heart-burnings cease;—
Woman, thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace."

Soul of Christ, do Thou sanctify my soul:
Body of Christ, Thy virtue make me whole:
And Blood of Christ, my passions' thirst control.

Cleanse, Water from Christ's Side, my heart from stain:
Passion of Christ, support me in my pain:
Let me not call on Thee, dear Lord, in vain.

Within Thy Sacred Wounds Thy servant hide:
Let nothing ever part me from Thy Side:
Defend me from the foe's malignant pride.

Call me what time my passing bell shall toll,
And bid me, with Thy Saints, reach Thee my goal,
To praise Thee while for aye the ages roll.

CANTO 26.

THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND.

"Dismiss the crowds, O Lord, for they intent
On listening to Thy Words are well nigh spent
For lack of needful food: let them be sent

"Into the neighbouring towns; too great the strain,—
Nor can they find in this wide desert plain
Wherewith their failing forces to sustain:—

"Bid them dispersed their own provision seek."
Thus to their Master did the Apostles speak;
And He to them in turn: "True, they are weak;

"They have been overtaxed; their weary feet
Brought them from far this morning and 'tis meet
That we should help them, give ye them to eat:

"And tell me, Philip, whence we may obtain
The necessary means." To Him again
Philip made answer: "Lord, the quest were vain;

"Two hundred pence in bread were scant, I ween,
Where full five thousand hungry men are seen,
Whose wives, beside, and children throng the green."

Then Jesus answered: "Philip, well I trow,
Judas, who keeps our purse, can let us know
Whether our stock be at its ebb or flow;

"But have ye nought at hand?" Then Andrew said:
"Only a lad (for all our means are sped)
Hath here two fishes and five cakes of bread."

Our Master bade them bring the barley cakes;
Into His Sacred Hands the bread He takes,
Looks up to Heaven, blesses it and breaks.

Five thousand guests and more the Twelve divide
Arranged in order on the moorland wide
By fifties and by hundreds, side by side:

And there, while in the midst our Master stood,
Our Master so compassionate and good,
They shared the loaves and fishes as they would.

The feast of benediction thus begun
'Neath the slant rays of the declining sun,
Is mid the darkening shades of evening done.

When all was over—satisfied each guest—
The Apostles gather, at their Lord's behest,
The fragments of the bread His Word had blessed.

Five loaves—five thousand fed—and after all
Twelve good-sized baskets full of fragments,—call
For power more great than nature can befall.

And He, Who with five loaves five thousand fed,
Now nurtures millions with His Flesh instead,
And man is fed on earth with Angels' Bread.

God's love how wondrous in Redemption's plan!
What strange self-emptying in God-made-Man!
O Love of Jesus, more than wit can scan!

Beneath the form of Manhood, God the Son
Reproach, contempt, and contumely hath won:
What in the Sacrament of Love is done?

O more! far more! with depths far deeper yet,
To rescue man and pay his boundless debt!
How can mankind such Lovingness forget?

If then, I suffer slights, contempt or pain,
Can I, for whom the Eternal died, complain
When union with Christ turns all to gain?

Soul of Christ, do Thou sanctify my soul:
Body of Christ, Thy virtue make me whole:
And Blood of Christ, my passions' thirst control.

Cleanse, Water from Christ's Side, my heart from stain:
Passion of Christ, support me in my pain:
Let me not call on Thee, dear Lord, in vain.

Within Thy Sacred Wounds Thy servant hide:
Let nothing ever part me from Thy Side:
Defend me from the foe's malignant pride.

Call me what time my passing bell shall toll,
And bid me, with Thy Saints, reach Thee my goal,
To praise Thee while for aye the ages roll.

CANTO 27.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST.

The Lord had said to Peter: "Thou art Rock;—
On thee I build My Church,—and she shall mock
The gates of hell and Satan's rudest shock."

To him again He said: "Get thee behind!
Thou wouldst set hindrance to the plan designed
By God My Father to redeem mankind."

For Simon ill could brook the tale of scorn;
The flaying scourge,—the brow-encircling thorn,—
His Master dying on a Cross forlorn.

Now would our Lord His trustiest three prepare
For those last fatal days, all solace-bare,
Which but for grace had drowned them in despair;

With Simon Peter, who hell's gates shall smite,
And Boanerges, He ascends the height
Of a secluded mountain: in their sight

He prays and is transfigured. There, anon,
His countenance a dazzling sheen put on
And all His raiment white with radiance shone,—

Whiter than linen, fuller's skill could blanch,—
Or blossoms clustered on the hawthorn branch,—
Or snows from Alpine tops that wild winds launch.

Then, as the Three Apostles with amaze
On their Transfigured Master wondering gaze,
New marvels still their admiration raise:

Moses, in glory at His side appeared,
Moses, whose presence e'en proud Pharao feared,—
Who, face to face, the bright shekinah neared:

Elias, too, whom fire from Heaven obeyed
The ox consuming on the altar laid,
Was there, in equal majesty arrayed;

The Two converse with Jesus, and their theme
Is the dread passage of that day supreme,
When He at Salem shall the world redeem.

Then Peter, with perplexed surmisings tossed,
Not knowing what he said, so wonder-lost,
At last finds words his Master to accost:

"'Tis good," he says, "to sojourn here and gaze
On glories such as these: say, shall we raise
Three tabernacles, Lord, to spend our days?

"One for Thyself—and for Elias one;—
For Moses one?" His speech no sooner done,
A cloud enfolds them, brighter than the sun!

No mortal could that gleam of Heaven sustain,—
And over-awed, beyond frail nature's strain,
Sense-bound and reft of speech the Three remain.

As prostrate they adored, they wondering heard
Christ's Sonship by His Father's Voice averred:
"This is My Son Beloved: hear ye His Word!"

He lays His Hand upon them: from the ground
He bids them rise; awakened from their swound
They lift their eyes again and gaze around.

The venerable Witnesses are sped,—
The cloud of glory and its radiance fled,—
The sward spreads green below, the blue o'erhead.

Then they descend the Mount, and on their way
Straitly the Lord enjoins them nought to say
Of all that they had seen. "Await the day

"When a new Sabbath shall the world illume:
When from the spices that His Grave perfume,
Christ shall, the Son of Man, His Life resume."

They hear, nor comprehend the Words He spake,—
Only they hold their peace for His dear sake
Nor, till the time assigned, their silence break.

CANTO 28.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

Lord, Thou didst come to make thy servants whole,
Thou canst the powers of life and death control,—
Quicken alike the body and the soul:

For as the body dies bereft of breath,
Man's soul no less is liable to death
Whence nought but Grace Divine delivereth:

And that mankind Thy Power herein may know,
Thou hast from time to time on earth below
Rekindled in the dead life's warmsome glow.

Christ raised Jairus' daughter from her bed,
And then the widow's son but newly dead,
At last He seeks a corse wherefrom had fled

The spirit four days gone, that so He may
Death and the grave despoiling of their prey,
Give earnest of His own bright Easter Day.

So ardently to drain His cup He yearned
That ever Calvary-wards His thoughts were turned,—
Yet to the full He had obedience learned

And while His Father's Will the end deferred,
As hovers o'er its nest some wistful bird,
Jesus awaited still His Father's Word.

A sorry welcome had He lately found
In His own Father's Temple, compassed round
With His own people. There His Voice was drowned

In threats of vengeance, for that He the Son
Appealing to the marvels He had done,
Claimed with the Eternal Father to be One.

Filled up their cup of hatred to the brim,—
They, fierce as savage wolves, environ Him,
Shouting as they would tear Him limb from limb.

Unconsciously beneath His glance they bend,—
He ties their hands,—in vain their rage they spend,—
And when they vainly think to apprehend

His Sacred Person,—without strain or force,—
For is not He Himself the only source
Of all their strength?—to Jordan's tortuous course

Calm He withdrew; and on those banks He sought
The spot where John had rare conversions wrought
And the quick Advent of Christ's Kingdom taught.

There sojourned He awhile and many, led
By earnest hope, to His encounter sped
And found all true His harbinger had said.

Meanwhile the winter season passes; still
Flows as a rapid torrent Cedron's rill
And its deep bed the rushing waters fill:

Beyond it, towards the sunrise, Olivet
With frequent trees of unctuous berries set
Rises with steep ascent,—a few weeks yet

And it shall witness marvels! Crossed its crown,
Some fifteen stades from Salem nestling down,
Reposes on the slope Bethania's town.

There, on those feasts which year by year attest
God's mighty Acts,—with welcome of the best
Did Jesus and His faithful Twelve find rest;

For dearly Lazarus and his sisters twain,
Martha and Mary, loved our Lord and fain
Would Him and His as guest-friends entertain.

Lo, Lazarus dying! His sisters, who despair
Of human help, a messenger prepare
And thus his peril to our Lord declare:

"He whom Thou lovest, Lord, is sick!" Our Lord
Keenly though touched in pity's sacred chord
Tarried of purpose set by Jordan's ford:

"Not yet," He said, "is Lazarus' course outrun,
But for My Father's Glory this is done,
That hereby men may glorify God's Son."

One day—and after that, another passed,—
And, while the future He Himself forecast,
He gave no sign of His intent; at last

He said to His Disciples: "Let us go
Into Judea." Then averse they show
Reasons deterrent, "Master, dost not know

"How lately Thou didst scarce escape the blows
And stones of Thy ill-wishers? Wilt expose
Thy life again to such relentless foes?"

And Jesus answered them: "Ye need not fear:
Men stumble in the night-time dark and drear,
But now as in the noon-tide all is clear."

Soon afterwards again the Master spake,
"Lazarus doth sleep; fain would I undertake
This journey from his sleep our friend to wake."

"Lord, if he sleep he will fare better," said
The Twelve who ill their Master's meaning read:
Then Jesus told them plainly, "He is dead!

"And for your sake 'tis well I was not there;
Now let us go." Then Thomas: "Let us share
Our Master's lot and fare as He may fare."

So towards Judea guided by their Lord
All bend their steps, and crossing Jordan's ford
Ere nightfall tread Bethania's verdant sward.

'Twas the fourth day since Lazarus had slept
And numbers who his obsequies had kept
With Martha and her sister Mary wept.

Martha with courteous zeal received each guest,
To each new comer her sad thanks expressed,
While Mary mourned apart from all the rest.

Therefore to Martha first was brought the fame
Of Jesus' near approach;—to Him she came,—
How throbbed her heart at hearing His loved Name!

She eagerly to give Him welcome hied
And then with meek remonstrance "Master!" cried
"Hadst Thou been here my brother had not died!

"But this I know, O Lord: whate'er Thou will
It is Thy Father's pleasure to fulfil!
He who hath Thee for friend need fear no ill!"

"Thy brother," He replied, "shall rise again."
She answered, "Yea, on doomsday, Lord; for then
Shall rise for judgment all the sons of men."

"I am the Resurrection," Jesus said,
"I am the Life of all,—Life from the dead,—
He that believes on Me tho' life were sped

"Shall live; and whoso in My Name believeth
Shall never die but endless life receiveth
And for his brows a crown of glory weaveth;—

"Believest this?" "Yea, Lord!" she said, "I own,
Thou art the Son of Him upon the Throne,
Come down to earth and as the Christ made known."

Then doth she seek her sister; drawing near
With sweet consideration in her ear
She gently whispers to her, "He is here

"And calleth thee." One glance of rapture given,
The cloud that mantled Mary's heart was riven,
As darkness by the dawn, all sadness driven!

She rose but spoke not, and with heaving breast
Shrouding her figure in her mourning vest,
Sped through the crowd of friends that round her pressed.

They marked her on her unknown errand bent
And wondering deemed that she grief-stricken went
Beside his grave her lost one to lament.

So Mary came and when she saw her Lord,
Prostrate she fell and at His feet adored,
While sobs His pity without words implored.

An interval of anguish ! then untied
Her tongue found utterance and distraught she cried
"Hadst Thou been here,—my brother had not died!"

Her grief in Jesus' Heart compassion found
And entering with the rest the burial ground
He asked of those who mourning stood around

"Where have ye laid him?" And they showed the way
And Jesus wept and when they saw it, they
Note how He loved him ; others doubting say :

"If He on one, blind all his life before,
Could give the boon of sight, how not, much more,
Save him from death for whom such love He bore?"

He reads their thoughts—to Him all hearts are known—
See Him afflicted sore in spirit groan,
Making the sorrows of His friends His own.

He bade them roll the entrance-slab away,
Then Martha cried remonstrant, "Master, stay !
Corruption hath set in—by this fourth day !"

But Jesus answered, "Said I not to thee,—
Only believe,—thou shalt God's glory see?"
So at His Word they set the entrance free.

Then Jesus with His Eyes to Heaven upraised
Said : "O My Father, let Thy Name be praised,
Hearing Me now as always ! These, amazed,

"Need proof that Thou hast sent Me ; for their sake
With invocation of Thy Power I spake
That they My Words as Words of Thine may take."

This said, behold Him at the entrance stand,— [hand,
"Lazarus," He cried, "come forth!" Bound foot and
The dead came forth with swath and winding band,—

Confined in arm and limb;—head napkin-wound!
No sooner heard the authoritative sound
Of Jesus' Voice but life and breath he found.

"Loose him and let him go!" And it was done;
And all were moved with awe and many a one
Believed and owned the Mission of the Son.

CANTO 29.

THE SUPPER AT BETHANY.

The clouds are gathering fast, the destined hour—
When hell to human seeming shall o'erpower
Even God's First-born, when the Heavens shall lower,

And darkness thick prevail,—doth nearer loom;
A day more big with portents in its womb,—
More dread, more fearful, than the day of doom!

And yet to the disciples free from care
And of the coming tempest unaware,
The morning breaks with sunshine bright and fair.

The destined spot is Salem—and the time
The Pasch, with all its mysteries sublime
Of Israel, freed from baffled Misraim.

Jesus, six days before the Pasch, had sought
Bethania's town, with loving memories fraught
Of works of mercy by His virtue wrought:

For there great wonders by His Hand were done,
At sight whereof misjudging God the Son,
Men murmured that by magic hearts were won.

The people to His word glad hearing gave ;—
Lazarus the eye-proof of His power to save
Stood there before them, rescued from the grave.

" If He go free all men His part will take ; "—
And with prophetic voice the High Priest spake,—
" One Man must die for all the people's sake."

Now is the hour foretold by Jesus, nigh,—
Now comes the moment loyal hearts to try,—
The hour of darkness when the best shall fly.

Often had Martha's sister weighed each word
Which now six months ago the Twelve had heard,
When Simon in the Christ his faith averred.

She knew He will submit to cord and chain,
Be scourged—thorn-crowned—and crucified and slain,—
Be buried, and the third day rise again :

And now with keen presentiment of fear,
Anxious she feels the fatal moment near
When her life's Sun shall set in darkness drear.

Simon the Leper would a feast prepare
In Jesus' honour : Lazarus was there
And Martha served with all her wonted care.

Mary, completed soon the frugal meal,
Bearing in hand the earnest of her zeal,
Will the forebodings of her love reveal :

A pound of spikenard of great price she shed,
Such as serves loving hearts to embalm the dead,
In rich profusion on her Master's Head.

Nor did she in her deep devotion spare
To anoint His Feet with sweet officious care,
And wipe them after with her unbound hair.

The gum from nard-trees that in Gilead bloom,
Perfumed the house and scented every room,—
A silent forecast preluding the Tomb.

Judas was loud in harsh and stern reproof,—
The rest, less petulant, yet held aloof—
As they too pleaded in the poor's behoof!

"Why," said the traitor, "make the sacrifice
On a well-meant, but foolish fond device
Of that which sold would fetch so round a price

"As would procure a full and wholesome meal
To feed five thousand poor whose wants appeal
To hearts that for their fellow-creatures feel."

Not that the poor and needy were his care
But, as the steward of the band, he bare
The purse and all the alms-gifts laid up there.

Our Master answered Judas and the rest,
"Why trouble ye the woman? Of her best
Hath she bestowed on Me—and she is blest!

"The poor within your reach are evermore,
They meet you by the way side, haunt your door,
And ye can make them sharers of your store:

"But Me ye have not always. Ah! refrain
From angry thoughts! She by this act would fain
Forestall My burial, wherefore then complain?

"Amen, I say to you, no realm nor clime
Wherein the Word is preached to the end of time,—
But memory shall record her act sublime."

O that, like Mary, we for Christ had striven!—
O that to Him our hearts like hers were given!
Say, for what else have we so oft been shriven?

Ah! Mary, mid the bustle and the throng,
Thou and thy generous deed shall be my song,
My patroness, my pattern, all life long!

CANTO 30.

PALM SUNDAY.

The marvel wrought on Lazarus four days dead,
Raised up by Christ from his sepulchral bed,
Gave earnest of the rising of our Head

From death to life. And now mid friends and foes
Divers forecastings in men's minds arose
As Jesus' earthly sojourn neared its close.

Envy and malice 'gainst our Lord arrayed,
And stung to madness by the might displayed
In Lazarus' resurrection, schemes had laid

Against His Life; meanwhile the Apostles' fear
Alternated with hope, as now more clear
His warning words or wondrous works appear:

His wondrous works a power divine disclose,
Proof at His will against a world of foes,
His warning words presage impending woes.

'Twas but yestreen that Jesus sat at meat,
And Mary, judged by Judas indiscreet,
Perfumed with nard her Master's Head and Feet:

Now, on accomplishing His work intent,
Jesus His footsteps towards the city bent,
And in advance He two disciples sent

To seek for, at a spot where two ways met,
In a near village on Mount Olivet,
An ass and foal whereon no man as yet

Had ever sat: He bade them bring the pair
And should they find the owner standing there,
He for the Master's sake the beasts would spare.

E'en so the Prophet Zachary of old
The fashion of Christ's royal state foretold:
"Daughter of Sion, be thou glad,—behold!

"Thy King upon a lowly colt shall ride,—
Its dam, inured to bear the yoke, beside;—
His pomp in meekness shall Thy Saviour hide."

Some on the patient creature improvise
Whereon the Lord may sit; and all with cries
Of joyous acclamation rend the skies;

Some their devotion to the Master show
Spreading their garments on the way they go;
Some, cutting branches from the palms that grow

With fan-like foliage on either side
Bestrew the road, along which Christ shall ride,
And shout with joy beseeming Paschal-tide;—

"Hosanna to the Son of David! Bring,
To Him Who cometh in God's Name, our King,
Glory and praise! Loud, loud Hosannas sing!"

Stung to the quick, the priests and scribes exclaim,
"Rabbi! rebuke the crowd for very shame!"
But Jesus answered, "Nay! forbear to blame

"These harmless signs of joy, nor entertain
Harsh thoughts; for know, should these their joy restrain,
The very rocks and stones would ring again!"

Then Jesus gazing on the city wept,
And sorrowing said: "Hadst thou but faithful kept
The Prophets' words, thou hadst with gladness leapt,

"Not mourned in this thy day! For God's own Peace
Had been thy portion, and a full increase
Of all good things: but now all joy shall cease

"In rueful blindness. Lo! thy foes around
Shall slay thy children in thy borders found,
And compass thee, and rase thee to the ground.

"Because the times and seasons erst made known
By ancient prophecy, thou wouldst not own,
Thou shalt lie waste, in dire confusion thrown."

CANTO 31.

PREACHING IN THE TEMPLE.

His Public Life is done; a few days more,—
The hearts of His disciples shall deplore
The Sun of justice set,—cloud-mantled o'er.

But first, the day of Palms,—the Temple sought,—
For Jesus' touch the crowd their sick ones brought
And by that touch at once He healed and taught;

To Gentiles also, who at Paschal time
To Salem came from many a distant clime,
A Voice from Heaven attests His claims sublime:

E'en children hail Him Heir to David's Throne;
The Scribes and Priests and Pharisees alone
Reject His Mission and His Rights disown.

No man was found when night her veil had spread
Who to his hearth or board our Master led,
Or gave Him shelter where to lay His Head.

The morrow morn the angry rulers ask,
"Who gave Thee right men's deeds to call to task,
Or from hypocrisy tear off its mask?"

He proves their malice and rejects the blame
On those who challenge Him, and in truth's name
Puts them to silence, albeit dead to shame.

Then with the Twelve, or e'er the sun had set,
As He ascends the slope of Olivet,
Their retrospective gaze the Temple met;—

Peter and James and John and Andrew there
Bade Him take notice of its structure rare,
With silent grandeur towering in the air.

He the dread future to their ken unveiled,—
A day of doom;—Salem by foes assailed;—
And the premonitory signs detailed:

There shall aloft be elemental wars,
On earth distress and judgment at the doors,
While ocean, wild with wind and tempest roars;

Then shall, upon the clouds, in dazzling sheen,
The Son of Man, the heavens and earth between,
Attended by the Angel Hosts be seen.

Be ye then ever watchful: Watch and pray!
So shall ye, void of fear 'mid earth's dismay,
Welcome the dawning of the Eternal day.

Soul of Christ, do Thou sanctify my soul:
Body of Christ, Thy virtue make me whole:
And Blood of Christ, my passions' thirst control.

Cleanse, Water from Christ's Side, my heart from stain:
Passion of Christ, support me in my pain:
Let me not call on Thee, dear Lord, in vain.

Within Thy Sacred Wounds Thy servant hide:
Let nothing ever part me from Thy Side:
Defend me from the foe's malignant pride.

Call me what time my passing bell shall toll,
And bid me, with Thy Saints, reach Thee my goal,
To praise Thee while for aye the ages roll.

CANTO 32.

SEEMING GOOD AND REAL GOOD.

Semblance of good! With pleasures that seem pure
Ofttimes doth Lucifer those souls allure
Which might from his temptations seem secure.

Of this be certain, that he will not lose
His prey without a struggle: so he wooes
Man's heedlessness, and whispers him to choose

What seemeth good. How good, quoth he, is wealth!
He knows wealth genders pride and so by stealth
Infects the soul and saps its ghostly health.

Good Angels true not seeming joys impart,
Coupling content with honesty of heart,
And soothe with comfort e'en sharp penance' smart:

And thus consoled, God's children ne'er can fear:
No state so full of pain,—no grief so drear,—
But they can hold their own, for God is near.

The Martyr, robing for the marriage-feast,
Death-doomed by Pagan Emperor or Priest,
Himself will irritate the lingering beast:—

The sick man wakeful on a bed of pain,
Will there, if God so will, life-long remain,—
The Cross of Jesus turning all to gain.

Such souls by desolation overtaken,
Tempted to think themselves by God forsaken,
Shall, for the night will pass, to joy awaken.

Contrition felt for sins now past and gone
Is streaked with rays of comfort, like the dawn,
From Jesus' Heart, the Sun of Justice drawn.

Our God's good Angels cheer the soul in sorrow:—
Sorrows to-day which will have passed to-morrow,
Reflected light from joys in prospect borrow:

But Satan's crew, obscuring all in cloud,
The source of peace in mists of darkness shroud,
And on their victims' souls sad fancies crowd;

Hiding the counterpoise to pain and care,
These they call curses men are doomed to bear,
Which must be drowned in riot or despair.

Where God is owned as Lord, the deepest gloom,
Though dark as night and lonely as the tomb,
Will soon to unmixed happiness give room,

While all the jocund merriment of sin
How loud soe'er its frantic boisterous din,
But masks a festering, cancerous sore within.

When Nature craving for indulgence cries,
Satan invents phantastic sophistries
To prove such craving rational and wise :—

"Thou, who hast joyed in merriment and song,—
How canst thou quit the laughter-loving throng
For paths to which sour devotees belong?

"See the long years that yet thou hast to live,
Canst thou those years to moping penance give?
As well with current water fill the sieve!"

"Nay," saith thy Master, "what hast thou to dread?
Lo, from My Heart, of good the fountain-head,
More than abundant grace on thee is shed:

"Thine enemy and Mine would have thee fear
That life is all too long to persevere :—
How know'st thou whether death be far or near?"

Quickly the pleasures of the senses pall;—
The peace of a good conscience best of all
Brings happiness and joy, whate'er befall.

The man that gives himself entire and whole
To God's sweet Providence, shall find his soul
In constant peace while journeying towards his goal.

God can, and God alone can joys dispense
Without the aid of outward things of sense,—
Joys beyond all that earth can give, intense.

Angels, or good or bad, the sense can use :—
Thro' it, bad angels men to sin amuse,—
Thro' it, good Angels holiest thoughts infuse.

But holiest thoughts may yet be sideways drawn,
And that which seemed so fair at early dawn,
May be, ere nightfall, blurred by Satan's spawn.

The soul, arrayed at morn, Christ's winsome bride,
From its fair promise may be drawn aside,
And ere the evening close, may end in pride.

If thou wouldst speed ;—beginning, middle, end,—
Must all be good :—who good with ill would blend
Will step by step to lowest depths descend.

If thou hast ever Satan's frauds believed,
Review the cunning arts thy soul deceived,—
Let trust betrayed be, ere too late, retrieved.

Be out of tune with evil : if sin glide
Noiseless into thy soul, noiseless abide,—
'Tis proof thy soul to evil is allied ;

But if like water splashing on a block
Of close-grained granite from the Nubian Rock,
Temptation strike upon thee with a shock,—

'Tis wholesome sign thy soul is in the right ;—
No bond-slave to the fiend that prowls by night,—
But faithful vassal of the Lord of Light.

Like Spirits chime with like : by thy heart's chord
With the bright Angels, be thy God adored ;—
Thy end,—the Greater Glory of the Lord !

Soul of Christ, do Thou sanctify my soul :
Body of Christ, Thy virtue make me whole :
And Blood of Christ, my passions' thirst control.

Cleanse, Water from Christ's Side, my heart from stain :
Passion of Christ, support me in my pain :
Let me not call on Thee, dear Lord, in vain.

Within Thy Sacred Wounds Thy servant hide :
Let nothing ever part me from Thy Side :
Defend me from the foe's malignant pride.

Call me what time my passing bell shall toll,
And bid me, with Thy Saints, reach Thee my goal,
To praise Thee while for aye the ages roll.

END OF BOOK II.

BOOK III. CANTO I.

THE LAST SUPPER.

All but accomplished His self-chosen task,—
Prefigured by the ancient Jewish Pasch,—
When Jesus' favoured Twelve drew nigh to ask

Where to make ready for the feast, He sent
Peter and John from Bethany. They went
Across the Cedron Vale where many a tent

Stood near the Eastern Gate: on entering there,
A serving-man, He said, would meet the pair,
Who in his hand a water-jug should bear:

They should inform them of the man they saw,
Where they, with azym cakes and lettuce raw,
Might eat the Lamb prescribed by Moses' Law.

They did His bidding,—found as He had said,
And guided by the house-holder, were led
Into an upper chamber duly spread,

Spacious and roomy, and with studious care
Well-furnished for a feast: there they prepare
All that the Law enjoined for Paschal fare.

Who, that had watched our Lord each morn and eve,
Had thought that when, that day, He took His leave
Of His dear Mother, envy would bereave

Her of her loved One? She had marked His speech,—
Dark words that e'en Apostles could not reach,—
And stored them in her memory, all and each.

How had He left her on that farewell morn?
As with a weight too heavy to be borne:
And she, poor Mother, desolate, forlorn!

Yet He spoke nought, and nought His Mother spoke:
But imminent she felt the fatal stroke;—
She let Him go, the while her heart-strings broke.

The Apostles too, with anxious looks, surmised
Some fearful grief at hand, till now disguised
By their dear Lord. He now the Twelve apprised

How with desire He had long desired
Or ere in death His earthly course expired
To eat with them the Pasch by Law required.

They ate the Paschal Lamb,—they drank the wine,—
Each one of better things the hallowed sign,—
That, of Redemption;—this, of Joys Divine.

He spoke of His departure close at hand;—
How one of them,—one of His chosen band,—
Should bear the stigma of the traitor's brand.

Ended the meal of that eventful night
Our Lord one grace, most precious in His sight,
Would on their hearts by His own pattern write:

He knelt,—His outer garment laid aside:—
A linen towel round His loins He tied,
And then the feet of all He washed and dried.

He came to Simon Peter, and essayed
To wash his feet the first: but he, dismayed
At humbleness so strange, his Master stayed:

"Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" "Simon, not now
Dost know My purpose." "Never, Lord, shalt Thou
To such an office, so unseemly, bow."

"Then thou and I must part," the Master said:
"Nay, Lord," he cried, as all reluctance fled,
"Not my feet only but my hands and head."

He came to Judas, and the traitor dared
Accept the service as tho' nought he cared,
But in due course with all the others shared

And Jesus lingered at Iscariot's feet
And pressed and handled them with touch so sweet,
A tiger's heart had melted at Love's heat!

Perchance He kissed them too, and then upraised
His loving Eyes, and into Judas' gazed:—
While unseen Angels round, looked on amazed.

In fine, when He had washed the feet of all,
He bade them love humility, and call
Those woes to mind, that pride of heart befall:—

How He had been their pattern; how they too,
If they would prove themselves His children true,
As He had done, should to each other do.

"Lo! I, your Lord and Master, wash your feet:
Is't not for servants and disciples meet,
They with like meekness should each other treat?

"Blessed are ye, who hear and do My Word:—
I speak not of you all, for ye have heard
How in the Psalms of David 'tis averred

"That he, whom I had chosen for My trust,
Should sell for pelf the Innocent and Just;—
The purchase-money with My foes discussed:

"That he, who shared My lodging and My board,
Who called Me Master, and confessed Me Lord;
With whom I walked in friendship's sweet accord,

"Hath to My overthrow lift up his heel."
O grief! enough to melt a heart of steel;—
Judas, thy heart hath lost the power to feel.

God hides Himself! Instead of,—an He chose,—
Shielding His Manhood from His heartless foes,
He leaves It helpless; down-crushed 'neath Its woes.

Ah! when I see the Heart of Jesus break
Thro' love for me;—some poor return to make,—
I too will welcome pain for His dear sake.

'Tis much to contemplate the end of man;
'Tis more the Angels' history to scan;
Greatest to trace Regeneration's plan!

See God the Word descend to man's estate,—
The Infinite the finite creature's mate,—
Exposed for love of man, to Satan's hate.

And men there are who dead to higher sense,
Inflate with vain sophistical pretence,
At God the Son's abasement take offence.

Oh! fools and slow of heart to apprehend
How in our God, Power, Wisdom, Goodness blend,
And things Divine to human condescend!

Boundless Infinity is Itself the cause
Which from high Heaven God the Eternal draws,
And subjects Him to His own creatures' laws.

Some count Him raised so far this earth above
That He for men can feel nor wrath nor love;—
Be they fierce wolves or gentle as the dove.

'Tis because man is little that he finds
Things great or small; kings, lords, and churls and hinds:
And what to him seems small nor heeds nor minds:

But God, Who finds equality in all,
With Whom no creature is or great or small,
Careth for things that men most trivial call.

It is because our God is boundless Might
E'en puny men are precious in His Sight,
And men so small, He lifts to Angels' height

By Angels' Bread, in that dread Banquet given
From Heaven to those whose hearts with sorrow riven,
Washed in Christ's Blood Divine from sin are shriven.

It was His Charity His Wisdom taught
To invent a means above all creatures' thought,—
Whereby to union God and man are brought.

When as His earthly course drew nigh its close,
He would not leave as helpless orphans, those
Whom for His children and His friends He chose.

What though His outward form were no more seen,
As He had veiled His Godhead, so I ween,
Neath lowly forms He could His Manhood screen:

All duly ended then the Paschal Feast,
When in the Archetype the figure ceased,
The true Melchisedech, our King and Priest,

Took bread, and as He broke the bread and blessed,
He spoke the Love Divine that filled His Breast:
"This is My Body; this My last bequest;—

"My Body, given for you: take ye and eat!
Show forth My Death as oft as ye repeat
This act supreme!" To make the rite complete

Into His Hands the precious Cup He took,—
Gave thanks and blessed with Heaven-directed look,
As One Who now all thoughts of earth forsook;—

And bidding all to drink thereof, He said,
"Erewhile, in figure, sheep and oxen bled;—
This is My Blood for sin's remission shed."

So did the Son of God to man incline,
And 'neath the humble forms of Bread and Wine,
Make man, by union with Himself, Divine.

But one was wandering through the city's gloom,
For whom no wreath of amaranth shall bloom:
Woe, woe for Judas, in the Day of Doom!

God hides Himself! Instead of,—an He chose,—
Shielding His Manhood from His heartless foes,
He leaves It helpless;—down-crushed 'neath Its woes.

Ah! when I see the Heart of Jesus break
Thro' love for me;—some poor return to make,—
I too will welcome pain, for His dear sake.

CANTO 2.

THE MYSTERIES FROM THE SUPPER TO THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANI; INCLUSIVE.

The Apostles' College minished now by one,—
The hymn recited and the Supper done,—
The Sacred Passion now indeed begun:—

Jesus would fain His Human Soul prepare
With strength Divine His Agony to bear,
And seeks that strength in earnest, humble prayer.

He knows the hour of darkness has arrived
When He, by His own will of aid deprived,
Shall meet the death by Satan's hate contrived:

Grief-overcome, His natural forces fail,
And sorrowful to death, worn-out and pale,
He crosses Josaphat's descending Vale.

His loved Eleven, gazing on His pain,
While at the sight their hearts are rent in twain,
From idle words of sympathy refrain.

In pity He forewarns them of the worst;—
The Shepherd shall be struck; the storm will burst
And smite the flock;—and all shall be dispersed;

All shall be scandalised! Then Peter cried,
As one whose fervid zeal the worst defied,
"Tho' all take scandal, I will fast abide."

"Simon, take heed; ere twice the cock shall crow,"
Jesus made answer; "thrice,—this night will show,
Thou shalt deny thou dost thy Master know!"

"Never," he answered, "will I Thee deny:
Rather, far rather, Lord, with Thee I'll die!"
And all the rest in like protestings vie.

Reached now the farmstead, hight Gethsemani,
Eight He leaves there, and with His wonted Three
He seeks the shadow of the olive-tree.

He taketh with Him Peter, James and John,
On whom erewhile transfigured He had shone,
And to the inner garden leads them on.

E'en three were too large company, and so
Apart from them He all alone will go:
As far as a man's strength a stone might throw.

But as their trial too was near at hand,
He bade them watch and pray, that they might stand
Secure against the schemes by Satan planned.

His depth of sorrow seemed His Soul to drown,—
His Prayer unheard,—Himself bent earthwards down,
Bowed like one crushed beneath His Father's frown.

On Him lies all the guilt of men's misdeeds;—
For us His Heart transpierced with sorrow bleeds,
God-Man for sinners agonising pleads!

Before His fancy in that vision passed
Time's durance and the world's, from first to last,
All the world's guilt,—so varied and so vast:

The sins begot by pride in Adam's seed;
The sins of sordid avarice,—Mammon's greed;
The sins that from the lust of dalliance breed:

The sins that luxury and sloth inspire;
The sins of burning rage and vengeful ire;
The sins in act, word, thought, consent, desire:

All, all are marshalled there before His gaze;
And Lucifer with craft astute displays
All that confounds the soul, the heart dismays:—

The sorrows of the faithful and the good;
The jeers and scoffs around the fatal Wood;
God's Love by man's ingratitude withstood.

No friend is nigh with feeling heart and warm,
To soothe the terrors that around Him swarm,
No respite!—nought, to lull the dreadful storm

God hides Himself! Instead of,—an He chose,—
Shielding His Manhood from His heartless foes,
He leaves It helpless;—down-crushed 'neath Its woes.

Ah! when I see the Heart of Jesus break
Thro' love for me;—some poor return to make,
I too will welcome pain for His dear sake.

At last, o'erwhelmed and prostrate on the ground,
While the bright chilly moonlight gleams around
His Heart, pent up with anguish, utterance found :

"Abba!" He cries, "O Father, hear Thy Son ;
Let this cup pass ; its griefs the brim o'errun !
If possible ;—if not, Thy Will be done!"

He rises dazed and, woe that it should be,
Those He had left to pray—the favoured Three—
He findeth sleeping neath the olive-tree.

Hear Him remonstrant thus to Simon speak,—
"Are thine eyes heavy, that they slumber seek?
The spirit, ay, is prompt : the flesh is weak!"

Again He left them and again He felt
The sins of all that on the earth had dwelt,—
And God's just wrath on hardened sinners dealt.

Again He prayed, "O Father, hear Thy Son ;
Let this cup pass ; its griefs the brim o'errun !
If possible ;—if not, Thy Will be done!"

To Him, descending thro' the moon-gleam weird,
An Angel in a track of light appeared,
To comfort Him Whom all in Heaven revered :

And He receives new strength to bear Him through
The onslaught made by Satan's desperate crew,
While fiercer and more fierce the conflict grew :

At last His frame surcharged resists no more :
A Bloody Sweat that bursts from every pore,
Moistens the ground with drops of trickling Gore.

He rises dazed, and woe that it should be,
Those He had left to pray,—the favoured Three,
He findeth sleeping 'neath the olive-tree.

See Him with gentle force the Three awake :—
"What! not one hour with Me your vigil make?
Pray, lest temptation o'er ye vantage take."

Once more He quits them, and exerts again
Divine endurance and love's utmost strain,—
'Neath desolation's last excess of pain :

His Prayer is heard! though in the darkness loom
A future, wrapped in gathering clouds and gloom,
The Father hears His Son ;—and stays the doom :

The Father hears Him for His reverence' sake ;—
In sanguine sweat His feeble frame may quake,
But still, not yet His Sacred Heart will break!

He rises, and the third time seeks the Three,—
Left by Him resting 'neath the olive-tree :
He finds them sleeping and He lets them be.

But brief delay ;—eftsoons a diverse horde
Draws near equipped with lanterns, swords and cord,
Charged by the priests to apprehend our Lord :

Now, no more sleep ;—lights glimmer thro' the glade :
Lo! Judas come! through greed a traitor made!
By him the Son to sinners is betrayed!

God hides Himself! Instead of,—an He chose,—
Shielding His Manhood from His heartless foes,
He leaves It helpless ; down-crushed 'neath Its woes.

Ah! when I see the Heart of Jesus break
Thro' love for me :—some poor return to make,—
I too will welcome pain for His dear sake.

CANTO 3.

THE MYSTERIES FROM THE GARDEN TO THE HOUSE OF ANNAS (INCLUSIVE).

The Paschal Moon, high in her orbit set,
An argent disc upon a dome of jet,
Lights up the verdure of Mount Olivet;

Calmly and peacefully she rides on high
As though all nature,—earth and sea and sky,—
Slept as an infant 'neath God's watchful Eye.

O sad, that will of man should introduce
Strange elements of discord, and break truce
In creatures made for man's behoof and use!

For while the moon shines placidly on high,
While the cool breezes thro' the olives sigh,
And stars bright-gleaming deck the cloudless sky:

The fiend that rules the powers of the air,—
And all the myrmidons of dark despair
To thwart salvation's plan their utmost dare:

They band in league man's envy, malice, ire;
Invade the very Apostolic choir,
And Judas' partnership with money hire.

In vain his conscience for his Master pleads;
In vain his Angel, whispering, intercedes;
For wage of thirty pence the troop he leads.

Meanwhile the scared Eleven cluster round
Their well-loved Master, as the muttering sound
Of nearing foes proclaims the Victim found.

Judas for thirty pence hath bartered bliss,
And, fool and traitor, for a price like this
Will single out his Master with a kiss:

Then Jesus asks (the blood-hounds kept at bay),
"Friend, wherefore art thou come?—Ah, Judas, stay!
Dost with a kiss the Son of Man betray?"

And then, "Whom seek ye?" saith He to the crowd;
"Jesus of Nazareth!" they cry aloud,
He answers, "I am He."—The miscreants, cowed,

Fall to the earth, their strength and numbers vain;
Our Master then, "Whom seek ye?" asks again;
"Jesus of Nazareth!" they shout amain.

"That I am He, just now ye heard Me say:
Me if ye seek, the rest ye will not stay;
Let these then unmolested go their way."

So did He prove His word most true, that those
Whom for His own His Father's Prescience chose,
Should 'neath His sheltering care unharmed repose.

"Ye knew," He said, "My every-day resort,
And all who heard Me could My Words report:
Why not arrest Me in the Temple Court?

"Why come ye now to seize Me as a thief?
As though—too plainly false to win belief—
I an ill-doer were or robber-chief?

"But 'tis the hour of darkness now,—the hour
When evil spirits souls of men devour:—
And 'tis your hour too:—to use your power."

Then Peter marking how the din increased,
Smote Malchus, servant of the Jews' High-Priest,
Shearing his ear; Jesus the wound re-pieced

And spoke remonstrant; "Simon! dost thou think
I from My Father's sovereign Will would shrink,
Or of the Cup He gives, refuse to drink?

"'Tis not as tho' the heavenly legions slept,
Or that they could not help and only wept:
But,—how shall else the Prophecies be kept?"

So the Good Shepherd by His foes is taken:
The trust and hope of His Apostles shaken;
And He, by one and all is left forsaken:

And while the Apostles fly bereft of hope,
His Hands are bound with chains and hempen rope
And He is dragged and hurried down the slope,—

Down to the brook,—then up the adverse side
Where five days since, the crowds Hosanna cried,
When in His Triumph they beheld Him ride.

The tight-strained cords well-nigh His sinews burst,
As He is haled to Annas' presence first,
The role of culprit and of judge reversed:

But few days gone, had Caiphas spoken sooth,
When he, as God's High-Priest, declared the truth;—
"One Man must die to win for all God's Ruth."

God hides Himself! Instead of,—an He chose,—
Shielding His Manhood from His heartless foes,
He leaves It helpless; down-crushed 'neath Its woes.

Ah! when I see the Heart of Jesus break
Thro' love for me:—some poor return to make,—
I too will welcome pain for His dear sake.

Peter who had by panic fear possessed
Fled like the others on the Lord's arrest,
Soon with remorse awakened in his breast

Follows the escort thro' the City Gate
Fearful at heart, but fain to learn what fate
May the Beloved One of his heart await.

Annas with haughty, supercilious air,
As though the accused were one below his care,
Bids Him His followers and designs declare;

And Jesus answers: "I the world have taught
Ever without reserve or after-thought;
Ne'er have I secret hiding-places sought:

"Aye in the Synagogue or Temple Court,—
Where Jews and foreigners in crowds resort,—
I taught; and they My teaching can report:

"Me wherefore dost thou ask? around us, lo!
Many I see have heard Me: let them show
What is My Doctrine;—for indeed they know."

At this appeal so fair, in cause so grave,
With simulated zeal a menial slave,
On Jesus' Face Divine, presumptuous gave

A cruel blow with iron-gaunted fist!
He meekly answered: "Have I justice missed,
Bear witness then against Me, an thou list:—

"But have I spoke aright? then why that blow?"
Meanwhile, bewildered, Peter stood below
Warming himself beside a brazier's glow:

Ere long the handmaid charged to keep the door
Looked at him steadfastly and scanned him o'er,
And thus at last: "Thee have I marked before

"Among the followers of the Nazarene,
And 'mongst His very intimates have seen!"
"Woman," he said, "I know not what you mean!"

Simon, predestinate, as firmest Rock
To bear, when Christ was risen, hell's rudest shock,
Stands, thro' self-trust, a woman's laughing-stock!

A few years later, and nor threat nor taunt
Shall Peter's meek and humble spirit daunt,—
Proof to confront Imperial Cæsar's vaunt.

He then, with Paul of Tarsus by his side,
Shall brave e'en Rome herself in all her pride,
Head downwards for his Master crucified.

CANTO 4.

THE MYSTERIES FROM THE HOUSE OF ANNAS TO THE HOUSE OF CAIPHAS.

Evil, to human seeming, hath prevailed,—
The Lord of Life with rancorous hate assailed
From Annas' house to Caiphas' is haled:

And men were told the Prisoner Whom they saw,
Once object of their reverential awe,
Had been confronted with the Holy Law,—

That Annas carefully His cause had tried,—
Had judged it clearly proved, and now relied
On Caiphas the sentence to decide.

It was this year saw Annas' title pass
To Caiphas, now chiefest of his class,
But void of priestly worth as sounding brass.

So Jesus stood, before His own High Priest;—
Jesus,—in Whom the Jewish priesthood ceased,—
Himself the Victim of the Paschal Feast.

With full connivance of the venal court,
Suborned false witnesses Christ's Words report,
And their true meaning, travestied, distort:

Touching His promised Sign, they captious swore,
"The Temple levelled,—ere three days were o'er,
He would the work of fifty years restore."

The while false witness 'gainst our Lord is brought,
He, like a lamb before its shearers, nought
In answer spoke: till Caiphas, distraught

And passionate demanded: "Dost not hear
The proofs that stamp Thy guilt like noon-day clear?"
Silent He stood, unmoved by taunt or fear.

The High Priest then, with frantic wrath inflamed,
No longer master of himself exclaimed:
"By Him, Who Israel's Living God is named,

"I do adjure Thee, tell us, Yea or No!
Art Thou the Christ, the Son of God?" "E'en so!—
I am!" He said, "and time the truth will show;—

"And ye the Power of the Son shall own
Seated at God's Right Hand, upon His Throne,
Alike by friends and foes confessed and known."

The High Priest rent amain his vesture's hem,
Reckless of rich brocade or priceless gem,—
Turned to the Councillors and asked of them:

"Ye hear His blasphemy! why waste the breath
Of witnesses? Ye hear Him,—what He saith:—
What say ye?—Guilty?" "Guilty, ay, of death!"

God hides Himself! Instead of,—an He chose,—
Shielding His Manhood from His heartless foes,
He leaves It helpless, down-crushed 'neath Its woes.

Ah! when I see the Heart of Jesus break
Thro' love for me:—some poor return to make,—
I too will welcome pain for His dear sake.

Peter meanwhile, irresolute and cowed,
Anxious from curious eyes himself to shroud
And pass unrecognised among the crowd,

With a disquietude he fain would hide,
The standers-by with many a question plied
Concerning Him he had so late denied!

Whilst he, uncertain, wanders here and there,
A maid exclaimed, "Why,—I could witness bear,
You of the followers of Jesus were."

All turned upon him their inquiring eyes,
While he, pretending innocent surprise,
His Master for the second time denies.

He flies the spot, and passing by the door,
Fear-stricken he betrays himself the more,
And in the Hall, the bright moon shining o'er,

First one and then another at him stare,
Reading his features by the brazier's glare,
And from his accent and bewildered air

Bespeak him friend to Jesus:—He began
To call down imprecations, oath and ban:—
"Sirs! I am not!—I do not know the Man!"

The second time the bird of morning crowed:
Then Simon's heart with bitter grief o'erflowed
While Jesus, passing at a distance, showed

By one sad glance how much He pitied him;
And then the great Apostle's eyes grew dim,
And floods of contrite tears ran o'er the brim.

Jesus is hurried from the Court Supreme
Into a dungeon without ray or gleam,
Where never entered sunlight's cheerful beam.

He suffered sore! could Angels tell how much?
Those Hands were tightly bound, Whose sacred touch
Had rescued souls from Death's reluctant clutch:

And they who dragged Him handcuffed, bound and chained,
From their hard-hearted chiefs more favour gained
As their hard-heartedness was less restrained!

With hard rough hands they smite Him on the cheek;
Brand Him impostor, impotent and weak,
And in derision challenge Him to speak:

His Sacred Eyes and Countenance they veil,
And bid Him, buffeted aud blindfold: "Hail!
Who struck Thee? say,—what, all Thy conjurings fail?"

O Innocence, abandoned and forlorn!
O ignominious shame, by Jesus borne!
Goodness Divine, blasphemed by human scorn!

They leave Him for the night, and each one goes
Home to his restful couch to court repose,
While Jesus watches till the dayspring rose.

God hides Himself! Instead of,—an He chose,—
Shielding His Manhood from His heartless foes
He leaves It helpless, down-crushed 'neath Its woes.

Ah! when I see the Heart of Jesus break
Thro' love for me:—some poor return to make,—
I too will welcome pain for His dear sake.

CANTO 5.

THE MYSTERIES FROM CAIPHAS' HOUSE TO PILATE'S.

The Jewish Court had sentenced Christ to die,
Yet must it with the Laws of Rome comply,
Nor by unlicensed act her power defy.

Did they no more than excommunicate
The sinless Object of their envious hate,
Such poor revenge could ill their fury sate:

'Tis blood,—and blood alone,—can slake their thirst!
Jesus must die!—the Nazarene accurst!
Must die the death;—and of all deaths the worst!

Next morning early, priests, scribes, elders,—all
Impatient throng the High Priest's Council-hall,
And Jesus, the Accused, before them call.

Or e'er the sun the daylight had restored,
The tablets, which last night's events record,
Once more revising, they condemn our Lord.

They put the question, "Tell us, Yea or No!
Art Thou the Christ?" "Though from My lips ye know
The truth," He saith, "Ye will not let Me go:

"Yet ye the power of the Son shall own
Sitting at God's Right Hand upon His Throne,
Alike by friends and foes confessed and known."

"Art Thou Who standest there, a piteous sham,
Art Thou the promised Seed of Abraham?"
And Jesus answered, "Yea, e'en so, I am!"

Not one of the assessors now demurred;
All His outspoken blasphemy have heard,—
And in the yestreen sentence all concurred.

They bind His Wrists with cords and handcuffs tight,—
Was ever Innocence done such despite?—
And usher in with wrong the morning light.

The powers of darkness have again prevailed:
Jesus, with all indignities assailed,
From Caiphas' to Pilate's house is haled.

With sanctimonious scrupulousness there
Legal defilement Priests and Scribes beware,
And hold aloof with Pharisaic care:

They go not in; a parley they reclaim;
And Pilate acquiesces: when he came
He asked them on what count the Accused they blame:

Proud, they insist that on their simple word
His guilt should be presumed: the charge preferred
Was theirs to judge, by heresy incurred!

"Judge Him yourselves then, if it be no worse;
If ye no thoughts of mortal vengeance nurse:"
He said in mockery: "Ye at least can curse!"

"His crime is to the death," they all reply,
"But, barred by Roman Law 'neath which we lie,
We cannot sentence any man to die.

"Yet not alone hath He our Law transgressed,
To things of State He hath Himself addressed;—
High treason is His crime, beside the rest!

"For is it not a treasonable thing
Men to forbid their lawful dues to bring?
And, spite of Cæsar, call Himself a King?"

Pilate returned to Jesus: "Who art Thou?
They say Thou claimest to be King! but how?
Small semblance has Thou to that name, I trow!"

"I am a King," He said. The Judge surprised,
The meek and humble figure scrutinised,
And, as half-witted, pitied and despised;

And in such mood he hears with bitter scorn
The loud and petulant false-witness borne
By men of ill-repute, suborned, forsworn.

False tales and idle hearsays they relate,
And multiply vague charges, in their hate,
Of acts of treason, done against the State.

The charges to the Prisoner are made known:
He hears them all in silence, and alone
He lets the simple facts the words disown.

While thus outside the Hall fierce passions surged,—
"Dost Thou not hear their charges?" Pilate urged,
"Say, can Thy conduct of this blame be purged?"

Tranquil and meek He stood, nor spoke one word;—
Whereat the Roman Judge, to wonder stirred,
Again to Jesus' royal claim referred.

"Say, art Thou Christ the King?" And He replied,
"This of thyself dost ask, or for thy guide,
On other men's surmisings hast relied?"

"Nay," Pilate answered Him, "Am I a Jew?
Your native priests call treason what You do:—
What have You done? Say, are their charges true?"

"There is a kingdom of this nether earth;
There is a Kingdom too of heavenly birth:
That one is mean, but this of priceless worth:

"This one is Mine: were Mine of this poor world,
Then 'neath My standard, by My friends unfurled,
Defiance would against My foes be hurled."

"Then, Thou art Christ the King?" He said, "That [name
Is Mine of right: into this world I came,
Confession of the truth from men to claim."

"Truth! What is Truth?" with supercilious pride
The Gentile with imperious scorn replied:
But on the spot his quest for truth belied

By issuing forth, his parley to relate,
Wherein, as touching treason 'gainst the State,
He nothing found to blame, or small or great.

Degenerate offspring of a chosen race,
A surging multitude before his face
Increased in numbers and in force apace:

E'en here he hoped to find more mercy than
In the High Priest and his besotted clan,—
And thus, to win their favour, he began:—

"'Tis your high Festival! and it is your way
To celebrate the gladness of the day
By making with deliverance one heart gay.

"Here are two prisoners arraigned,—of these
It rests with you to favour which you please—
Your voice condemns the one,—the other, frees.

"Barabbas one, blot on the name of Jew,—
A rebel, robber, and a murderer too;
Ringleader of a vile bloodthirsty crew:—

"Against the other, there are men who say,
That He forbids you Cæsar's dues to pay,
And Rome's decrees would have you disobey.

"Not then your privilege of grace to lose,
Which of the twain will ye for freedom choose?
Barabbas, or the Christ, King of the Jews?"

The crowd, with clamorous but consentient voice,
"Not this Man but Barabbas," speak their choice;—
And scribes and rulers in the wrong rejoice.

And they who five days gone, "Hosanna," cried,
Changed like the vane by shifting currents tried,
Are instant now to see Him crucified!

God hides Himself! Instead of,—an He chose,—
Shielding His Manhood from His heartless foes,
He leaves It helpless; down-crushed 'neath Its woes.

Ah! when I see the Heart of Jesus break
Thro' love for me;—some poor return to make,—
I too will welcome pain for His dear sake.

CANTO 6.

THE MYSTERIES FROM PILATE'S HOUSE TO HEROD'S.

It irked the Roman Governor to find
The fickle people of their rulers' mind,—
No less to justice than to mercy, blind!

Jesus had dwelt on Lake Genesareth's strand,—
So Pilate in his state-craft shrewdly planned
To pass the trial to another hand:

Herod had lately from Machærus' fort
Come to the City, and there held a Court,
Whither the pleasure-hunters had resort

At Paschal-tide. Erewhile he had not stayed
By a rash oath to a rash act betrayed,
To slay Christ's herald for a wanton maid:

Here was Christ's Self, and Herod and his train
Exulted in the thought how mirth should reign,
With such an One the Court to entertain.

Strange cures had been ascribed to Jesus' touch;
The blind dismissed his guide;—the lame his crutch;—
The dead were snatched from the gaunt tyrant's clutch;

See where the Wonder-Worker comes along,—
Harried and hooted by a rabble throng,
His goodness recompensed with graceless wrong.

"He will," thought Herod, "gladly win our grace;
How else, so unbefriended, could He face
The frenzy of a maddened populace?"

So Jesus stood arraigned before the King;—
And still His enemies new charges bring,
Or on the old ones still new changes ring.

Some, self-convict of bare-faced falsehood, come;
With vain and idle tales, unproven, some:
While Jesus stands before the shearers dumb!

Patience in Him and Royal State combine:
He will not cast His pearls before the swine,
Nor juggling tricks enact by Power Divine.

He will not serve an idle pastime's tool;
So Herod mounts Him on a mocking-stool:
Then sends Him back, white-vestured, as a fool!

O wonderful humility! How steep
The infinite incline! The depth how deep!
What can poor mortals do but love and weep?

God hides Himself! Instead of,—an He chose,—
Shielding His Manhood from His heartless foes,
He leaves It helpless;—down-crushed 'neath Its woes.

Ah! when I see the Heart of Jesus break
Thro' love for me;—some poor return to make,—
I too will welcome pain for His dear sake.

CANTO 7.

THE MYSTERIES FROM THE HOUSE OF HEROD TO THAT OF PILATE.

Herod sends Jesus back to Pilate: they
(Putting their ancient bickerings away)
By craft of state are reconciled to-day.

Pilate, though loth, must now resume the case,
And with time-servingness as false as base
The ignoble path of compromise will trace.

He trembles as he marks the human surge:
They note his weakness, and the death-doom urge,
And, cowed, he yields his Victim to the scourge.

O Jesus, weltering in Thy Blood Divine,
Was ever grief so exquisite as Thine?
Would I Thy sufferings might assuage by mine!

Hark how the whips sharp whistle thro' the air!
See how most ruthlessly His Flesh they tear,
Cut deep the furrows, and the bones lay bare!

God hides Himself! Instead of,—an He chose,—
Shielding His Manhood from His heartless foes,
He leaves It helpless; down-crushed 'neath Its woes.

Ah! when I see the Heart of Jesus break
Thro' love for me;—some poor return to make,—
I too will welcome pain for His dear sake.

His garments gathered up,—the scourging done,
New outrages await the Incarnate Son,
And a strange interlude is now begun.

His Love for men no torments can control—
His Holocaust is made entire and whole,—
And He will die the death,—the Cross His goal.

But first, His boastful and preposterous claim
As one entitled to the Royal Name,
Prompts to the troop a right fantastic game.

"Is He a King?—He shall be King indeed!
King-like, with royal circumstance shall speed!
He shall have worship to His utmost greed!"

They strip Him of His vesture, and instead
Clothe Him in drugget of imperial red,
And set a Crown of Thorns about His Head:

Then for a sceptre, put they in His Hand
A reed,—and bid Him on a daïs stand,
And give His orders to His martial band:

At last, of gibes and blasphemies enough,—
Such sport is soon exchanged for sport more rough,—
Blows, spittle, buffetings and iron-mailed cuff.

With hands well-gauntleted 'gainst prick of spine
They press the piercing thorns, the Crown that line,
Into the circuit of the Brow Divine.

They set Him throned, upon a broken chair:
Into His patient Eyes insulting stare,
And spit upon Him and pluck out the hair.

Prone on their faces they before Him fall,
And greet Him on their knees as King withal,
While peals of laughter echo through the Hall!

In vain they buffet Him, blaspheme and rail,
He loved them all too much to wince or quail;—
So doth God's Love man's malice countervail!

God hides Himself! Instead of,—an He chose,
Shielding His Manhood from His heartless foes,
He leaves It helpless; down-crushed 'neath Its woes.

Ah! when I see the Heart of Jesus break
Thro' love for me;—some poor return to make—
I too will welcome pain for His dear sake.

A new device now Pilate's wit engaged:—
Haply the passions that so wildly raged
Might by the sight of Jesus be assuaged.

Resolved to win the people if he can,
He leads the Victim forth: he bids them scan
The pale, wan Face, and cries, "Behold the Man!"

The Jewish priests, with shrewder insight, know,
That not at fortune's ebb but at its flow
The fickle populace its grace will show.

As Jesus stands before the judgment-place,
No comeliness they find to win their grace;—
No sightliness in that bruised, livid Face:

He stands despised,—most abject among men;—
A Man of Sorrows, struck by God;—and when
The vacillating Judge demands again

Their judgment on the Victim at his side,
"Away with Him! away with Him!" they cried,
"Away with Him! let Him be crucified!"

God hides Himself! Instead of—an He chose,—
Shielding His Manhood from His heartless foes,
He leaves It helpless; down-crushed 'neath Its woes.

Ah! when I see the Heart of Jesus break
Thro' love for me;—some poor return to make,—
I too will welcome pain for His dear sake.

CANTO 8.

THE MYSTERIES FROM THE HOUSE OF PILATE TO THE CROSS.

Summoned to make their choice, the infatuate Jews,
Tho' Pilate's self for Christ their pity wooes,
Reject the Just One and the murderer choose!

"If thou," they cry aloud, "let this Man go,
A Man Who would be Cæsar's rival,—know,
Thou art not Cæsar's friend, but Cæsar's foe."

So, terror-struck at what the world might say,
He will the sacred trust of right betray
And, basely selfish, yield the wolves their prey.

Yet would his poltroon soul evade the blame,
So sure to stigmatise the deed of shame,—
A deed of murder masked by justice' name:

Nor only so, but he was scared still more
By visions of the night, that witness bore
To Him Who stood His judgment-seat before:

Visions that moved his wife for Christ to plead,—
Nor less for Pilate's self than Christ indeed,—
For, whoso touched that Just One should not speed.

He called anon for basin and for ewer,
As tho' the outward washing could secure
Honour untarnished and a conscience pure.

"Ye are," he said, "the authors of this guilt,—
It is not I by whom this Blood is spilt!"
Whereat, "E'en so! so be it, an thou wilt!"

The people cried who, thronged, before him stood;—
"On us and ours His Blood, if so he would;—
We and our children; we will make it good!"

Their tongues prevail: a Cross of wood is made,
And on the Shoulders of our Master laid;
Who, well content, without a word obeyed.

Yea! well content,—for was it not for this,—
E'en to save sinners from the dread abyss,
He had descended from His Throne of Bliss?

Yet, tho' with inward joy the Victim bent
Beneath His Death's predestined instrument,
His weakened Frame, with foregone anguish spent,

Short space had traversed towards the city gate,
Ere, 'whelmed by pain beyond endurance great,
Lo! He succumbs and sinks beneath the weight.

God hides Himself! Instead of,—an He chose,—
Shielding His Manhood from His heartless foes,
He leaves It helpless; down-crushed 'neath Its woes.

Ah! when I see the Heart of Jesus break
Thro' love for me:—some poor return to make,—
I too will welcome pain for His dear sake.

His Mother at Bethania now had heard
Rumours by casual passengers averred,
How all Jerusalem had been up-stirred

By her dear Son's arrest:—without delay,
Nor waiting till night's shadows, passed away,
Had yielded entrance to the dawn of day:

She sought the city, and amid the throng,
Beheld in speechless grief the cruel wrong,—
The Lamb of God, haled ruthlessly along.

She would draw nigh ;—would share in His distress ;—
But hindered by the crowds that round her press,
All her love's efforts meet with scant success.

At last towards Calvary, the road-side nigh,
The spot, without the walls, where He must die,—
The anguished Mother waits His passing by.

Jesus, recovered from His painful Fall,
Urged on by menials of the High-Priest's hall,
Crosses the limit of the city wall :

Wearily toiling on with staggering feet,—
Slow labouring onwards,—in the midmost street,
The Eyes of Jesus and His Mother meet !

What tongue shall tell the grief on either side ?
His grief for her, who fain for Him had died ;—
Her grief for Him, doomed to be crucified !

God hides Himself ! Instead of,—an He chose,—
Shielding His Manhood from His heartless foes,
He leaves It helpless ; down-crushed 'neath Its woes.

Ah ! when I see the Heart of Jesus break
Thro' love for me ;—some poor return to make,—
I too will welcome pain for His dear sake.

Soon, wholly spent, no more can Jesus bear
The undivided weight :—not Him to spare,
But lest He die uncrucified, they share

With Simon's strength the ponderous penal Wood :—
For God, made weak for man, no longer could
Support the strain, but strengthless, tottering stood.

Simon, Cyrene-born, abhorred at first
The Cross, by Jews and Gentiles deemed accurst,
But, when he yielded at the last, there burst

As from the sun, with clouds late mantled o'er,
A glow of wondrous peace, unknown before,
Strangely contrasting with the load he bore !

So aye are honest souls by Jesus blessed ;
And when they seem to men most grief-oppressed
Then, most of all, in Him they find their rest.

And when in after times,—the truth discerned,—
Rufus' and Alexander's sire had learned
Who Jesus was, his heart within him burned ;

And then, sad memories changed to sacred joys,
That day his never-wearying tongue employs,
Each fact recounting to his listening boys.

The next whose love He would with love repay,
Was one, yclept, as ancient legends say
Veronica. She watched Him on His way :

She saw Him staggering !—ne'er could she forget
How from His Sacred Temples drops of sweat
Trickled profuse ;—His raiment was all wet !

The Matron, touched with sympathising grief,
Fearless of Jewish priest or scribe or chief,
Reached Him a kerchief's opportune relief.

Nor void of guerdon did her love remain ;
Instead of aught disfigurement or stain,
The kerchief's folds a wonder-print retain ;

As bears the wax emollient counter-sealed,
The figure of the seal, so stands revealed
The impress which the Holy Features yield.

Jesus now falls a second time: anon
Women, who mourn Him tottering, pale and wan,
Give vent to clamorous sorrow; He thereon

Bids them lament their own and children's woe:
For if the green wood be mistreated so,
What shall the dry and sapless undergo?

But why waste time in parleyings such as these?
Jesus must onwards as the ruffians please,
And spent at last He sinks upon His Knees

And falls again,—the third time;—but no more
Need He be goaded on: the march is o'er,—
And He must hang upon the Cross He bore.

So God the Son, made Man, the Father's Heir,
Is stretched upon the ground,—and soldiers dare
To strip Him of His garments, stark and bare:

Nails through His Sacred Hands and Feet are driven;
His Mother's heart at each sharp stroke is riven;—
He prays: "O Father, be their sin forgiven!"

God hides Himself! Instead of,—an He chose,—
Shielding His Manhood from His heartless foes,
He leaves It helpless; down-crushed 'neath Its woes.

Ah! when I see the Heart of Jesus break
Thro' love for me;—some poor return to make,—
I too will welcome pain for His dear sake.

Then to discredit more the Word Divine,
One, on each side His Cross, with wit malign,
Two thieves as His companions, they assign:

This done, whatever Pilate's craft might mean,
The truth is in the superscription seen—
"King of the Jews! Jesus the Nazarene!"

CANTO 9.

ON THE MYSTERIES OF THE CROSS.

Jesus is crucified !—Hushed every sound
Of joy in Heaven !—the Angels cluster round
And mourn their Lord and King, nail-fast, thorn-crowned.

Hardhearted Jews and wanton Gentiles rail,
While they who loved Him most lose heart and fail,
As o'er their best resolves weak fears prevail.

Mary His Mother, stood beside Him then,
Mary of Cleophas and Magdalen,
And John alone, of less devoted men.

The soldiers who had lift Him up in air,
Into four equal parts His garments tear,—
To each of the quaternion his share :

Only His seamless coat, by Mary's hand
Woven throughout with one continuous strand,
Finds by the die its owner in the band.

The Jews around the Cross to madness stung
Outrage our Master, and from their foul tongue,
Scoffs, taunts and insults without stint are flung :

"Vah ! Son of God ! Who wouldst God's House destroy,
And build it in three days ! Thy strength deploy,
Come down ! Of Thy vain boasts we wish Thee joy !"

God hides Himself ! Instead of,—an He chose,
Shielding His Manhood from His heartless foes,
He leaves It helpless ; down-crushed 'neath Its woes.

Ah ! when I see the Heart of Jesus break
Thro' love for me :—some poor return to make,—
I too will welcome pain for His dear sake.

In wondrous contrast to their jarring din,
Jesus, all peace His Sacred Heart within,
Breathes Seven Words that trance the Seraphin.

The first tells how, in Jesus' Heart so true,
Ruth for His ruthless foes would justice woo;—
"Father, forgive; they know not what they do!"

Straightway this Word bears fruit, for of the twain
Hung up beside His Cross in sheer disdain,—
While both at first took part in the refrain

Wherewith the standers-by held up to scorn
The "Galilean Prophet, Nazareth-born,"—
One touched by grace is moved the past to mourn,

And thus bespeaks his comrade;—"We indeed
Of our past crimes receive the fitting meed:
This Man hath done no wrong!" Then did he plead

In his own cause, and Christ's good will implored:
"When, in Thy Kingdom Thou shalt come, adored
As Son of God, remember me, O Lord!"

Nor did in vain the contrite robber pray:
He heard with joy that chased all pain away:
"Be thou with Me in Paradise to-day."

And now, ere Jesus' mortal life shall close,—
Ere He shall yield His breath in death's last throes,
He on His Church a parting boon bestows,—

That boon His Mother,—she, with pent-up sighs,—
As Simeon had foretold—and tearful eyes,
Stands by His Cross, heart-broken, till He dies.

John He bequeaths to her, and her to John,—
Each to the other's loving care.—Anon,
John takes her to his own, from that time on.

Hereby, a cord of mystic love was spun ;—
In Mary hath Christ's Church a Mother won ;—
And every Christian man is Mary's son.

Bequeathed His Mother,—sorrow's darkling cloud
Envelopes Jesus as a funeral shroud,
And mournful shadows o'er His Spirit crowd.

Hear Him, Himself, all desolate, complain,—
Must all be lost? Must all His bitter pain
Be to no purpose borne? is all in vain?

Has He renounced His State? resigned His Throne?
And chosen human frailty for His own?
To die at last abandoned, and alone?

Alone, alone, He hath the winepress trod!—
And thus He cries, beneath the atoning rod
"Why, why hast Thou forsaken Me, My God?"

Count up His torments: can He suffer more?
Hath He not sweated Blood at every pore?
Runs not the Chalice of His Passion o'er?

His Heart is fain with agony to burst!
What griefs remain? Hath He not borne the worst?
He speaks! Hark! Listen to that cry! "I thirst!"

Nay, Lord! enough! Some limit must be set
To love's excess like Thine. Thy Bloody Sweat
And Calvary's Cross have overpaid sin's debt.

Long since, at Bethlehem's crib, hadst Thou begun
God's honour to repair :—the sand is run ;
All, all is consummated! All is done!

Suffer no more, O Lord, for man's behoof!
Pain-surfeited, regain Thy Father's roof,—
Thou hast of love, past reason, given the proof!

With resignation, Lord, entire and whole
Thou teachest Saints to win their aureole ;—
"I, Father, to Thy Hands commend My Soul!"

God hides Himself! Instead of,—an He chose,—
Shielding His Manhood from His heartless foes,
He leaves It helpless ;—down-crushed 'neath Its woes.

Ah! when I see the Heart of Jesus break
Thro' love for me,—some poor return to make,—
I too will welcome pain for His dear sake.

Behold, thick darkness o'er the sun is driven,—
Rocks rent! Saints' bodies from the tombs up-given!
The Temple's veil from top to bottom riven!

But, lo, the moon ere long heaven's arch will climb,
And for the Sabbath's sake, 'tis well nigh time
To bury out of sight the signs of crime :

Jesus is dead : why should mere thieves exhaust
The Jewish Rulers' patience? Time were lost
Were they not done to death at any cost!

So with brute violence they die ; but lest
There should be lacking aught Christ's Death to test,
God's Wisdom pre-ordained that it should rest

On certain proof : Longinus draweth near
And piercing His Heart's region with a spear,
Red clots of Blood stream down, with Water clear!

So doth God's goodness frustrate Satan's art :—
As Eve from Adam's side,—Eve's counterpart,
God's Church, is born from Jesus' Sacred Heart.

CANTO 10.

FROM THE CROSS TO THE SEPULCHRE.

The lifeless bodies must be cleared away :—
They must not desecrate the Holy Day :—
Jews must keep Sabbath, tho' its Lord they slay !

Of the thieves' corses they at once dispose
Into a ditch hard by,—e'en as they chose,—
Without or reverence or winding clothes.

But Jesus' Body was the Sacred Shrine
Linked with the Person of the Word Divine,
Destined in three days' space again to shine

United with that Soul, which now at rest
Where neither Jew nor Roman can molest,
With light of Paradise, drear Hades blessed.

Joseph of Ramatha till now had quailed ;—
But in this time of need God's grace prevailed
And while Apostles hid themselves and wailed

Their Lord in coward fear, and shrank afraid,—
He taking heart, the Roman Judge essayed,
And supplication for Christ's Body made.

Pilate, surprised that He was dead so soon,—
So few hours counted since the fatal noon,—
After inquiry made, conferred the boon.

So then with Nicodemus' loyal aid,
All reverential honour duly paid,
The lifeless Form in Mary's lap is laid.

See how His Mother, with a Mother's care,
No tender service love-inspired will spare : [Hair,—
She strokes His Brow,—she smooths His tangled

She gazes on His pale disfigured Face,—
Fairest, by right, of all the human race,—
So gracious once, now all bereft of grace.

How her heart bleeds, as, gazing on her Son,
She marks the Blood which from His Brows had run;
And gathers out the Thorns; all,—one by one.

His Hands and Feet the ragged nail-prints bear;
The very bones, exposed to view, declare
How deep the Roman scourge the flesh can tear.

See His poor Mother in her grief's excess,
With such a Mother's privilege impress
On His cold Brow a Mother's fond caress.

No son had brought his mother such delight;—
No mother's love e'er glowed with flame so bright;—
Companionship, most like the Infinite!

Six lustres gone, He rested in her womb:—
Now she receives Him, towards the evening gloom
For deposition in the silent Tomb:

And while her Son on costly spices slept,
She, lost to things around, her station kept,
So overwhelmed with grief, she hardly wept.

When John in whisper minded her at last,
That for her loved One grief and pain were past,
On His dear Form one lingering look she cast;

No word she spoke, no sob escaped her breast;
She went her way;—she left her Son at rest;—
Herself all desolate, yet still all blest!

Meanwhile the chiefs with counterfeited zeal
(Lest the Apostles should the Body steal)
Roll the stone home, set guards, and plant their seal.

CANTO II.

THE DESOLATA.

All, all is silent! Lo! the sun hath set,
The bright moon gleaming on a dome of jet;—
All still, on Calvary and Olivet!

Night's shadow o'er the unconscious city creeps,
And all her children in oblivion steeps;—
Jerusalem, the Deicidal, sleeps!

The childless Mother's heart is rent in twain,
Nor doth the thought that He shall rise again
Assuage the sharp excruciating pain:

John, the Beloved, bequeathed to her as son,—
(A poor exchange for Him,—her only One!—)
Had a son's kindly offices begun:

She sat,—by him conducted to his own,—
Without or speech, or sob, or sigh, or moan;—
Too great her sorrow for expression grown.

And thither came with loose dishevelled hair
The faithful Magdalen, her grief to share,
With grief less ruled, more kin to mute despair.

And one by one the holy women sought
The silent, dolorous Mother; and distraught,
Not consolation, but their own griefs brought.

As hours pass on, the thought that He should rise,—
That ere the sun had mounted thrice the skies,—
He should again bring gladness to her eyes,—

Reminds her how her Son had won His prize;
Opens the sluices of her tears;—unties
Her tongue, and "Oh! who is as God?" she sighs;

She meekly whispers, calm with grace Divine,
"I all to Thee;—to all Thy Will resign!
Do Thou Thy Holy Will, and Thou dost mine!"

Now see her to the other mourners turn!
See her o'er each as fondest Mother yearn!—
They in her calm a ray of hope discern,

While she reminds them how her Son had told
He must fulfil the Prophecies of old,
For thirty silverlings betrayed and sold;

How He the rulers' envy must awaken,—
Before the Gentiles' judgment-seat be taken,
And even by His Father seem forsaken!

While thus she minded them of all the grief,
Predicted and accomplished, she was brief,
Hastening to tell the hope of glad relief

That should succeed the sorrow!—He that died
For Israel's sake,— by Israel denied,—
Should not abandoned in the tomb abide

And know corruption; but ere three days flown,
His Body raised to life,—His foes o'erthrown,—
Death and the grave should Him their Conqueror own.

Yet, truths admitted cannot fail to borrow
Colour and sadness from the present sorrow;
And so, forlorn, they waited for the morrow.

But the Apostles who, on that sad day,
Had left their Master to His foes a prey,
And taken flight in timorous dismay,—

Where, where are they? Where Simon? who so loud
His steadfastness had boasted, and was cowed
By a girl's question in a menial crowd:—

He who one day should o'er Christ's Church be head,
Craven and frighted with bewildered dread,
Like all the rest had terror-stricken fled.

Will he now hide himself for very shame,
Or will he openly his fault proclaim
And self-accuser, humbly court the blame

From her remonstrant lips would surely fall,
Who standing by the Cross, in sight of all,
Showed how no terrors could her soul appal?

Ah! who hath ever reason found to tell
Of harshness in that Mother who so well
Had learned to pity sinners, not repel?

He came,—and pent-up sobs his utterance drown;-
She, her heart's likeness to her Son's to crown,
Gave him her hand to kiss,—as he knelt down.

The others, scared at their own voices' sound;—
Some here, some there, precarious shelter found;
Some in the city, some in parts around:

Meanwhile Christ's Body, all that Sabbath day,
That seemed to eyes of flesh but lifeless clay,
With God the Son, joined in One Person, lay.

So doth He still, God-Man on earth abide
And, in the Sacred Host, His Manhood hide:—
Angels adore, while witless men deride!

END OF BOOK III.

BOOK IV. CANTO I.

OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST OUR LORD. OF THE FIRST APPARITION.

Christ had no sooner yielded up the Ghost
Than He descended to the shadowy coast,—
The home of souls. A vast expectant host

Waited His coming. There, abode the dead
Downwards from Adam, mankind's fountain-head,
To those whose souls the last from earth had sped.

In that still prison-house, in tranquil rest,
With certain hope of God's bright Vision blessed,
Kings, Patriarchs, Seers their souls in calm possessed.

Year after year had heard the deep-drawn sigh :—
E'en centuries rolled on :—the Dawn is nigh !—
Rise, Sun of Justice ! Orient from on high !

Abel, whose body first beneath the sod
Was laid to rest,—who first death's pathway trod,—
Patient, expected there the Will of God :

Our great first Parents, though reproach was hushed,
Still in the presence of their children blushed,
Despondent till the serpent's head was crushed :

They who were heedless while the Ark was built,
Yet, ere the Flood o'erwhelmed them, owned their guilt
Waited until the ransom-blood was spilt :

Noë and Job ; and Daniel, who so well
Had learned the glories of the Christ to tell,—
Skilled not to rescue their own souls from Hell :

Abraham, God's friend; and Sara by his side;—
Isaac;—Rebecca, Isaac's only bride;—
Jacob and Lia; Rachel too, who died

At Ephrata; chaste Joseph; Benjamin;—
And all the Ancients who from deadly sin
Were shriven or ere the hour of death set in;

He who preferred God's least to Pharao's best;
Aaron, who bore the Thummim on his breast;
Prophets and Kings; good men and women blest;—

Counted the days since Gabriel of old
Promised that Christ should come and claim His fold
"When seventy weeks of years were duly told."

Joseph appears, and to their joy supreme
Tells of the Angel's visits:—his own dream;—
Of Nazareth;—Bethl'em;—and the load-star's gleam:

John Baptist, who erewhile in Jordan's plain
Had been Christ's herald, now, by Herod slain,
Is welcomed as Christ's harbinger, again.

For six months more the Souls expectant wait,
When some that tarried near the close-barred gate
(Outside whereof the lost ones, fixed in hate,

Pass from the world above to that below,
Where they nor gleam of hope nor respite known,
Consumed for aye in unrepenting woe:)—

These souls, attentive, caught a far-off din,
Which, nearing, echoed the whole vault within
As though all hell at once uproused had been!

All hell's confusion cannot drown that scream!—
Hark! the black demons shout as they blaspheme,—
"Eh! thirty pennies scarce worth getting seem!"

"O wretched me!" the wretched Judas cried;
"O wretched fool!" his torturers back replied,
"To-day thou hast thy Master crucified."

Lift up your heads! Ye gates, uplifted, rise!
Christ, with the radiant Legions of the skies,
Comes, and the prison-gate wide open flies.

Who is the King of Glory? Christ the Lord!
By Saints through every age and clime adored,
And hymned by Seraphs on their heaven-strung chord!

The gates fly open, and a lightsome sheen
Gleams through the prison-house; and Christ is seen;
Glorious, majestic, amiable, serene.

Adam and Eve, now prostrate at His Feet,
Can smile once more: O happiness complete!
O happy fault, such counter-foil to meet!

With His sweet Benison He blesseth all;—
Is fain each loved one by his name to call;—
And gladden with the joy that ne'er shall pall!

Winter is gone,—smiles now the longed-for spring!
O, what a loving Master is our King!
Blest are the Souls His risen glories sing!

In the soft light that beameth from His Rays
The happy Souls in rapture gaze and gaze
With Alleluias' ecstasy of praise!

And now a Guardian Angel, whilome sad,—
Whose sadness, through the grace of Jesus, had
Been strangely altered, and who now was glad

With passing gladness,—led to Jesus' knee
One who not six hours gone, had heard that he
That day with Christ in Paradise should be.

Turned now to Eve, "Mother of all mankind,"
Thus Jesus gently spake; "Recall to mind
The boon My Father from the first designed:

"How He Who mixed the salve for human woes
Would make the serpent and the Woman foes,
And, with the tempter crushed, the warfare close:—

"Come, Joachim and Ann! 'Tis time at last
To cheer your daughter's heart so grief-o'ercast,
For all but Mine, her grief all griefs surpassed.

"Go we and seek her! Come ye to the grave,
The Body which to Me erewhile she gave,
Now with Its Soul doth Its reunion crave:

"That Flesh, exposed to pain and shame and scorn,
With scourges, nails and lance unseemly torn,—
That Head, late wounded with the prickly thorn,—

"Those five deep Wounds which on the Cross I bore,—
That Heart, grief-filled, but aye athirst for more,—
My faithful through all ages shall adore."

All to Christ's Words attentive hearing lend,
And wondering thoughts with expectation blend,
While in still silence they await the end.

How high soe'er ascend the height to scale,
All force to bar a spirit's course must fail
Piercing earth's rind from Limbus' dusky vale:

Christ willed Earth's surface and was present there;
The Holy Souls their Master's virtue share,
And, at their will, regain the upper air:

The lifeless Body, stretched upon the ground,
With myrrh and aloes in the cere-cloth wound
Within the fast-sealed Tomb, they gather round.

He (at Whose bidding Lazarus' soul once more
Resumed the body it informed before :—
Who proved Himself Almighty to restore

A perfect manhood, rent by death in twain)
Makes His own Soul and Body One again,
And in His Kingdom Christ begins to reign.

After the Burial (when the Sun went down
And night put on her glittering star-lit crown)
John, through the by-ways of the silent town

Led Jesus' Mother gently to his own,—
And there she tarried ; yet not all alone,
For, like the turtles to the dovecot flown,

The other women to our Lady hied
And fain would spend the Sabbath at her side,
And mourn with her, her Loved One crucified.

'Twas fitting when the destined hours were run,
The meeting of the Mother with her Son
Should find her all alone, with witness none :

So while the rest their diverse paths pursued,
The Virgin Mother in her solitude
With calm presage the instant future viewed.

John seeks out Simon ere the daylight springs,
And as the younger, to his elder clings
Trusting the prudence that experience brings :

As for himself, his faith was vague : Alas !
All that his Master had, as in a glass,
Portrayed of pain and shame, had come to pass :

Those other words, no less precise and plain,
That, three days after, He should rise again,—
He thought not of them or he thought in vain.

The same bedimmed, unhopeful faith attends
The anxious care of Magdalen and her friends
Who, for scant funeral rites to make amends,

Seek their dear Master's grave: they rose with haste
Long ere the morning sun night's gloom had chased,
And to the Sepulchre the pathway traced.

Mary had perfect faith! What God's own Hand
In Wisdom, Power, and Charity had planned,
She from the Prophet's Oracles had scanned:

Not so the others; they indeed could draw
Truth from the Psalms, the Prophets and the Law,
When the fulfilment in the fact they saw;

They failed to pierce the future: Mary's eyes
Are quick of sight, and her keen sense descries
The mystic truth which 'neath the surface lies.

He Who had fore-announced His Cross and Pain,
The bitter Chalice 'twas His Will to drain,
Had also told how He should rise again:

So then 'twas lack of perfect faith that led
The pious women to the rock-hewn bed;—
While Mary tarried at her home instead.

See her within her chamber, trouble-free;—
Sure that, as Christ had promised, she shall see
The issue with His Promised Word agree.

Nor did her hopes prove frustrate,—while the rest
Haunted the tomb, bewildered and distressed,
She by the vision of her Son is blessed.

Words cannot tell the rapture of that meeting,
Mary with Jesus risen, each other greeting,—
Evangelists have deemed it pass repeating:

Far less shall we, in over-curious mood,
With thoughts inquisitive and footsteps rude,
On Jesus' and His Mother's Bliss intrude.

The veil of darkness that the Godhead wore
Is rent, and Jesus' virtue, hid no more,
Reveals Itself, all pain and sadness o'er :

And He Who came the Temple's veil to rend
And Heaven and earth, as Mediator, blend,
Gives to His Mother joys, all joys transcend.

CANTO 2.

OF THE SECOND APPARITION.

Whilst Jesus Risen to His Mother brought
Such happiness as passeth speech or thought,
The other Maries with sweet spices sought

The Tomb, whereon,—(lest friendly hands might steal
The Sacred Relic,)—Pharisaic zeal
Had set for safety's sake the public seal.

The women, conscious that their strength must prove
Too slender from the cavern's mouth to move
The slab embedded in the rocky groove,

Confer perplexed : arrived, they joyful own
God's goodness, in the Tomb wide open thrown,—
Unclosed the entrance, and rolled back the stone.

But whence that trouble? whence that 'wildered air?
Whence their contentment changed to sudden care?
The Body of their Master is not there !

All were perplexed, but more than all, distressed
Was Mary Magdalen, who loved Him best,—
And strange conflicting thoughts disturbed her breast.

She to His Mother would the tidings break,
And yet forbare for sheer compassion's sake,
Till from the Apostles she might counsel take.

She knew where Simon sojourned, and that John
Had sought him out ere sunrise, and anon
Quick to consult them both, she hied her on.

Confused, and wondering what her words might mean,
The Apostles haste together towards the scene
Of her announcement: she must be, they ween,

Victim of some delusion. On their way
They meet the other women,—blithe and gay
At words of consolation which they say

Angels had spoke to them,—"Ye seek in vain
The living with the dead! Raised up again,
He hath His promise to His friends made plain.

"Do ye not mind how, many a time, He said
He should be slain, and after life was sped
Again should rise in triumph from the dead?"

Their tale the Apostles mere delusion deem;
As Mary Magdalen, so the women seem,
By some strange fantasy beguiled, to dream.

Yet, while they credence scant or none afford,
They still are loth to leave all unexplored
Words, which if true, so nearly touched our Lord.

So both alert to Jesus' Tomb repair:
John reaches it the first, yet doth not dare
To enter in, but waits his elder there:

Then Simon after comes,—nor long delay,—
And both with earnest, reverent gaze survey
The hallowed spot where late their Master lay.

Here, on the ground the linen cloths are spread;
There, by itself, the kerchief for His Head;—
And all confirms what Magdalen had said.

At last the Apostles with the rest depart,—
But Magdalen remains; her wounded heart
Only where Christ had lain, can bear its smart:

She hovered round the sepulchre and wept;—
Unwearied, all alone, her stand she kept,
Haunting the place where last her Master slept:

She peers all round the spot where Christ had lain;—
And, lo! to her astonished gaze again
There sit at head and foot, bright Angels twain!

"Woman, why weepest thou?" the Angels say:
And she, "Alas! my Lord they've stolen away:
I know not where they've laid Him! Woe the day!"

Angels could not content her; so she turned
And in the twilight dim a form discerned,
Nor recognised the Lord for Whom she yearned:

And thus He spoke: "Why, woman, dost thou weep?
Whom seekest thou?" And she with sigh drawn deep,
Thinking 'twas he whose charge it was to keep

The rock-girt garden where her Master lay,
Said, "Sir, hast thou removed Him? Tell me, pray,
Where He is laid: I'll take Him hence away."

And Jesus answered, "Mary!" and she cried
"Rabboni, Master!" and in rapture tried
To kiss His Sacred Feet; but He denied

That boon as yet, and said, "Awhile forbear!
And do not touch Me! Fear not! thou shalt share
This joys with others, like thee too, My care.

"I am not yet ascended: be it thine
To tell My brethren, how the Word Divine
Ascends to God His Father; theirs and Mine."

The veil of darkness that the Godhead wore
Is rent, and Jesus' virtue, hid no more,
Reveals Itself, all pain and sadness o'er:

And He Who came the Temple's veil to rend,
And Heaven and earth, as Mediator, blend,
Consoles His loved ones as a friend his friend.

CANTO 3.

OF THE THIRD APPARITION.

While Magdalen at the Tomb remained alone
And Jesus, to her ravished sense made known,
Addressed her in His own familiar tone,

The other women (on whose souls our Lord
Had peace by messengers from Heaven restored)
Were hastening on their way Mount Sion-ward:

Salome, wife to Zebedee, was one:—
'Twas she had asked, Christ's endless Reign begun,
A place at Jesus' side, for each dear son.

The mother of that James was with them too [threw,
Who prayed when stoned, for them the stones that
"Forgive, them, Lord; they know not what they do."

Along with these Joanna found her place,
Who, e'en in Herod's Court received the grace
To hate the world, and Christ's dear Love embrace.

Who most had sinned, had also loved the most,—
Happen what may she will not quit her post,
And Christ's first vision Magdalen shall boast.

The others loved Him too, and, if compared,
Their love was less than hers,—yet still they shared
In her reward, and as His loved ones, fared.

Soon, as they went, their risen Lord they meet,
His gracious Words their happiness complete,
And filled with joy they cast them at His Feet.

No more doth He the signs of love withstand;
He gives full licence to the pious band
His Feet to kiss and clasp with reverent hand.

He bids them seek His brethren, and convey
The joyful news, which like the morning ray,
Shall change their cheerless night to cheerful day.

They haste to bear His Message, but they seem
Dupes of a vain and unsubstantial dream,—
And none as true their burning words esteem.

The veil of darkness that the Godhead wore
Is rent, and Jesus' virtue hid no more,
Reveals Itself, all pain and sadness o'er:

And He Who came the Temple's veil to rend,
And Heaven and earth, as Mediator, blend,
Consoles His loved ones as a friend his friend.

CANTO 4.

OF THE FOURTH APPARITION.

The wondrous tidings by the women brought,
Embarrassed Simon's soul, who, lost in thought,
In vain the tangled skein's unravelling sought.

Christ ought to rise again:—how then discard
These self-same tidings as to credence barred,
Because to natural sense they seemed so hard?

Christ ought to rise again:—Himself had said it;
Yet the fulfiment seemed to baffle credit: [tread it!
Faith's height so steep! What grace there needs to

Besides, a sense of shame abashed the Saint:
Had he not three days gone, with spirit faint,
Drawn from his Lord that glance of meek complaint,—

A glance that opened forth a sluice of tears,
That ceased not flowing through successive years,
Each morning as the cock-crow reached his ears?

Sure but for this, to him had been revealed
That miracle supreme whereby is sealed
Christ's right o'er men the Power of God to wield.

The women gone, he gave in charge to John
Their friends to assemble when the night came on:
On his own soul no gleam of comfort shone;

He wept for his denial: earthward bowed,
Now silent, grieved,—now piteous, sobbed aloud;—
Praying to God for light to pierce the cloud.

"In Thy drear Passion I increased Thy Pain
By my denial, and must Thou again
Of my discouragement and doubt complain?

"Thy meek remonstrant Look my baseness chid:
Let not Thy pardoning Grace for aye be hid,
Master, forgive! I knew not what I did!

"If my denial then, conceal from sight
Thy risen Presence now, O, give me light,
And chase away misgiving's dreary night!"

"Simon!" "Rabboni!" Only this is said;
"Simon hath seen the Lord!" and thenceforth spread
Faith thro' the members from the Apostles' Head.

The veil of darkness that the Godhead wore
Is rent, and Jesus' virtue, hid no more,
Reveals Itself, all pain and sadness o'er:

And He Who came the Temple's veil to rend,
And Heaven and earth, as Mediator, blend,
Consoles His loved ones as a friend his friend.

CANTO 5.

OF THE FIFTH APPARITION.

While Simon mourns disconsolate the Lord
And visions which eye-witnesses record
To his desponding heart no peace afford:

Two of the brethren (Cleophas was one)
Set out for Emmaüs, westward now the sun;—
And Emmaüs, from that day's events, has won

A name above great cities. As they went,
In anxious communing the time they spent,
Perplexed with harassing bewilderment.

Ere long a Stranger in their track is seen:
He overtakes them, and with Voice serene
Asks what the sadness in their looks might mean:

He too had trouble known, and sympathized
With grief: then answered Cleophas, surprised
That He should come from Salem unadvised

Of facts so widely bruited:—He displayed
A wish to hear them. They this answer made:—
"Of Jesus, called the Nazarene: we paid

"Homage to Him, as Saviour of our race;—
Prophet in Word and Work;—before the face
Of God and Israel: but, O evil case,

"Our priests and rulers, on His ruin bent,
Though He had done no ill, with one consent,
Charged Him with treacherous purpose and intent

"Against the rights of Cæsar: they prevailed,—
The while we fondly hoped to see Him hailed
As Christ the King: now, all our hopes have failed

"And hence our sadness; and yet, strange to say,
Women we know, who, before dawn to-day,
Went to His Tomb: the Body was away:

"Angels they saw and Angels' voices heard:
Some of our friends, astonished at their word,
Put it to proof, and found as they averred."

Then thus He answered: "Why so sad your tone?
How so unwise! How so dull-hearted grown
The ancient prophecies fulfilled to own?

"If careful hearing to those words you lend
Ought not the Christ in pain His Life to end,
And so to His predestined Throne ascend?"

Then from the Books of Moses and the rest,
Books as Divine by Israel's sons confessed,
He made Messias' life-course manifest.

Arrived at last at Emmaüs, the twain
Importunate, their unknown Friend constrain
To break His journey and their guest remain.

"Nay, go no further! Stay, our welcome guest!
The sun is setting,—sinking in the West,—
The day's far spent; abide with us and rest."

They unaware their own dear Lord invite:—
He at their board sat down,—'twas early night,—
Took bread—blessed—brake—and vanished from their sight.

When in the pilgrim they the Lord discern,
"Did not," they said, "our hearts within us burn
Those Words of Wisdom from His Lips to learn?"

Unfinished their repast,—with eager haste
(No time, with tidings such as these, to waste)
They to Jerusalem their steps retraced:

In joy they find the brethren,—not as erst,
When all concealed themselves through fear, nor durst
Hear their own voices, fearful of the worst:—

They learn what, after they had left, befell;—
The brethren, full of joy, the tidings tell,
"Simon hath seen Christ risen; all is well!"

The veil of darkness that the Godhead wore
Is rent, and Jesus' virtue, hid no more,
Reveals Itself, all pain and sadness o'er:

And He Who came the Temple's veil to rend,
And Heaven and earth, as Mediator, blend
Consoles His loved ones as a friend his friend.

CANTO 6.

OF THE SIXTH APPARITION.

Glad news the brethren to each other tell;—
Tidings that sadness from all hearts dispel,—
"Christ hath appeared to Simon, all is well!"

The news that Christ had risen from the dead
Lay not an idle rumour, fast it spread;
And where it brought not joy, awakened dread;—

Dread mixed with envy in the hearts of those
Who, or deluding or deluded, chose
To range themselves among our Master's foes.

And this gave trouble to the chosen Few
Gathered in secret now from public view,
In that large Upper Room, all so well knew,

Where to complete His fore-ordained design,
With transubstantiated Bread and Wine
Christ His Elect had fed with Food Divine.

They to each other tell,—the doors made fast,—
What with the women at the dawn had passed,—
With Simon then,—at Emmaüs at the last.

Lo! as they speak, they see their Master stand
His wonted Self amid His wonted band,—
And greeting "Peace," He blessed them with His Hand.

Then, while they looked in fixed amaze, He said
"Be glad! 'Tis I! now risen from the dead!
This is no phantom that should cause you dread;—

"This is no form of air to cause deceit;
Think you a spirit could so counterfeit
The solid Body, and your handling meet?"

From their astonished souls all doubt to take,—
Not for His need, but for their weakness' sake
He asks for food, as He His fast would break:

With ready speed obedient to His wish,
They do His bidding, and present a dish
With honey-comb and fragments of a fish.

Thus set at ease, without or doubt or fear,
With joy they recognise their Master dear;
All trouble vanishes when Christ is near!

And once again the faithful Ten He greets,—
His gracious words of benison repeats,—
And in these words their world-wide charge completes:

"As God My Father sent Me down to earth,
So I send you to all within its girth,
To give them endless life, by heavenly birth."

He breathed on them; and by His Spirit's grace,
He gave them charge o'er all of human race,
Filled they the highest or the lowest place.

And thus He bade them meet the sinner's need:—
"Whose sins you pardon shall from sin be freed,—
Those ye retain, shall be retained indeed."

The veil of darkness that the Godhead wore
Is rent, and Jesus' virtue, hid no more,
Reveals Itself, all pain and sadness o'er:

And He Who came the Temple's veil to rend,
And Heaven and earth, as Mediator, blend,
Consoles His loved ones as a friend his friend.

CANTO 7.

OF THE SEVENTH APPARITION.

When first our Lord consoled the brethren bowed
With painful grief;—when He dispelled the cloud
That wrapped them like a dark funereal shroud,

Not all were present:—Judas, sad disgrace!
Transformed by greed from highest to most base,
Had in the Apostles' College lost his place:

And Thomas too, had from the common roof
Been absent, and incredulous of proof,
Remained in moody solitude aloof.

In vain the Blessed Mother passed her word,—
In vain the women their clear proofs averred,—
In vain the witness of the Ten he heard:

"Your dreams," he said, "by cool discretion weighed,—
Your strange assertions, credulously made,
Into thin air before calm reason fade;

"And in this judgment resolute I bide,
Until I see His Hands and Feet and Side;—
Until the issue of my touch be tried."

The circuit of the week comes round again,
The Ten are met, and Thomas with the Ten,—
More wise, as he presumed, than other men.

The doors are fast! a well-known Voice is heard,
(As o'er its fledgelings might some parent bird
Announce its coming): every heart is stirred:—

"Peace be to you!" and then, "Thy hand extend,"
He saith to Thomas; "Let all doubtings end;
And to be higher raised, let reason bend."

"My Lord! My God!" he cried, and trembling stood,
Abashed that through ungenerous doubt he could
Grieve such a Master, so supremely good.

And now Christ's solemn words faith's aureole weave,
"Thomas! by seeing thou dost faith conceive:
Blessed are they who see not, yet believe!"

The veil of darkness that the Godhead wore
Is rent, and Jesus' virtue, hid no more,
Reveals Itself, all pain and sadness o'er:

And He Who came the Temple's veil to rend,
And Heaven and earth, as Mediator, blend,
Consoles His loved ones, as a friend his friend.

CANTO 8.

OF THE EIGHTH APPARITION.

How doth the Presence of the Power of God
Raise things contemptible! The earthy clod,
That void of life and under foot is trod,

May be united with a human soul:
And then that human nature form a whole
With God the Son, Whose Person shall control

The One Entire! Our God, to compass this,
Inaugurates Love's infinite abyss:—
Emptieth Himself, that Peace and Truth may kiss.

Again; the substances of Bread and Wine
By Him are changed into a Thing Divine!—
The earthly sign and heavenly counter-sign.

So doth God elevate the sons of earth,
And raise their weakness by a heavenly birth,
To rank and state of supernatural worth.

So Gabriel the child of Ann addressed,
As full of grace, far high above the rest,—
Sweet Mary, ever-Maid, God's Mother blest.

And thou, Genesareth, hail! all seas above,
Thou art a figure how the Mystic Dove
Exalts the soul possessed of Jesus' love.

'Twas on the margin of this favoured sea,
Tiberias' Lake, yclept of Galilee,
Jesus first summoned to their high degree

His chosen Twelve. Here He, for such as sought
To learn God's Truth, and docile spirits brought,
To prove His Word the draught of fishes wrought.

On this same sea another sign He gave,
When He made manifest His Power to pave
The liquid plain, and indurate the wave:

Now He is risen again, upon its strand,
Lo! seven of those who formed the Apostles' band,
Arrived in Galilee, assembled stand;—

Simon and Thomas, and the intrepid pair
Hight Boanerges and Nathanael, share
The hope of seeing their dear Master there.

They wait expectant: when the day was done,
And still no sign of Him:—the setting sun,—
The rippling waves,—the fishing hour begun,—

All called to memory how, three years ago,
They had been wont, what time the sun sank low,
As fishers, on the lake their nets to throw.

Simon declares his purpose, now once more
To spread the fisher's net and ply the oar,
And bid Genesareth yield them of its store.

The rest agreed : they hired a fitting boat,—
They launched it with united strength afloat,
And well-timed strokes the moonlit waters smote.

They quit the land : recedes the busy shore,
And as the varied hum of men is o'er,
They on their craft God's benison implore.

They toiled as fishers should, but all that night
In vain they laboured : and, the morning light,
Frustrate, again they near the self-same site

They yestreen quitted. There upon the beach
Stood Jesus, near enough for mutual speech,
Scarce further distant than a stone might reach :

There Jesus stood, yet no one of them thought
'Twas Jesus asked them, "Have ye taken aught?"
They answered, "No! our night-long toils are nought."

To them our Lord : "On that side of the craft
Which to the right hand lies of those abaft,
Let down the net, and ye shall find a draught."

And as He promised, so He made it good ;
They took so large a draught, do what they would
They scarce could draw the net. Then understood

John the Belov'd, that He Who spake the word
Was his dear Master's self, and so averred
To Simon Peter ; he no sooner heard

His partner in the toil the fact assert,
Than quick his fisher's coat he round him girt,
And cast him in the sea. The rest, alert,

Two hundred cubits towards the sea-board steered,
Drawing the net along, and as they neared
The spot where Jesus stood, half hoped, half feared :

They found live embers kindled on the shore,
With fish thereon, and bread ; to them once more
The Stranger gave direction as of yore,

And bade them land the draught. Therefore again
Peter returned, and now, despite the strain,
The meshes from a hundred fish sustain

And fifty-three, he draws the net to land.
Then Jesus saith to them as round they stand,
"Come ye and dine." Obey they out of hand

And do His bidding : but they still forego
To ask Him Who He is :—indeed, they know :
Then doth He come more near to them ; and lo !

He shares the loaf of bread, and bids them take :
He gives them of the fish : their fast they break ;—
And thus the Lord to Simon Peter spake :

"Simon of John ! dost love Me more than they ?"
And Simon straight made answer : "Yea, Lord, yea !
Thou know'st I love Thee ;"—then doth Jesus say

With loving care, "See that My lambs thou feed !"
And thus again : "Simon of John ! indeed
Dost love Me ?" And he answered, "Lord, what need

"Of words ? Thou knowest well my love for Thee."
"O'er then My lambs," said Jesus, "shepherd be."
"Simon of John !" the third time, "lov'st thou Me ?"

And Simon's heart with grief was sorely tasked,
Thus for the third time by his Master asked,
Whether he loved Him : never had been masked

His ardent love but once, when panic-strung
He thrice denied, the rabble rout among;
But even then his heart belied his tongue.

Grief-stricken now, he, who had thrice denied,
For the third time, "All things Thou knowest," cried,
"Thou knowest, Lord, I love Thee." Then replied

To him our gracious Master: "Feed My Sheep!"
Words of significance, far-reaching, deep,—
Wherewith He charged him His whole flock to keep

E'en to the end of time. 'Twas now the hour
To ground His Church like Sion's rock-based tower,
And clothe His Vicar with His sovereign Power:

And as the question thrice-repeated told
Of that sad parting-feast, when, overbold,
Simon had boasted nought could loose his hold

On loyalty to Jesus, humbler grown
And self-mistrustful, he was fain to own,
Who leans on his own strength, is quick o'erthrown.

His Master comforts him, and minds him how
When young he went where'er he would, but now
He must prepare to others' will to bow,—

The strength of manhood passed, old age shall numb
His stalwart vigour, and himself shall come
By others led to painful martyrdom.

Then, as He would to Peter's self alone,—
The rock sustaining each foundation stone,— [known,
The things that touched His future Church make

He bade him follow Him: Now John was there
Whom Jesus loved; and Peter showed his care
On John's behalf, and asked how he should fare.

Then Jesus answered: "What if I decree
That he shall tarry and My Advent see?
Thee it concerns not: do thou follow Me!"

So then as Jesus on the Cross had died,
Peter shall die, head downwards crucified;
John, to the end, martyr of love abide.

The veil of darkness that the Godhead wore,
Is rent, and Jesus' virtue, hid no more,
Reveals Itself, all pain and sadness o'er:

And He Who came the Temple's veil to rend,
And Heaven and earth, as Mediator, blend,
Consoles His loved ones as a friend his friend.

CANTO 9.

OF THE NINTH APPARITION.

When as our Lord's earth-sojourn neared its close,
'Twas time to clothe with their high functions those
Whom for His Kingdom's Hierarchs He chose:

He had a Pastor on His Church bestowed,
To guide His sheep along the narrow road;
Unerring guardian of His Gospel code:—

He had consigned to Simon all His flock,
And named him Cephas, as a sturdy Rock,
Proof to resist Hell's fiercest, rudest shock.

Tho' Satan's frantic rage might ply the flail,
Christ's prayer for Peter's faith shall never fail;
Christ should in Peter to the end prevail.

"Cephas shalt thou be called,—shalt Cephas be;
Lo! in thy person men shall honour Me,—
On earth My Vicar by Divine decree."

Alike to all He gives their charge;—too hard
For men without God's Aid: they must regard
The world,—God's world by Satan's envy marred,—

Field of their labours: here they must begin
A truceless warfare 'gainst the powers of sin,
And souls thro' penance to God's Mercy win.

And in these words did Jesus charge the Eleven:
"All power is given to Me on earth,—in Heaven;—
I send you forth corruption's mass to leaven:

"As I teach you, go teach all men the same:
Mankind to God, baptized in the Name
Of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost reclaim.

"All you have learned from Me, to others teach;—
I will be with you, heart and hand and speech,
Long as the durance of the world shall reach."

The veil of darkness that the Godhead wore
Is rent, and Jesus' virtue, hid no more,
Reveals Itself, all pain and sadness o'er:

And He Who came the Temple's veil to rend,
And Heaven and earth, as Mediator, blend,
Consoles His loved ones as a friend his friend.

CANTO 10.

OF THE TENTH APPARITION.

At first, when Jesus rose, on only one
Shone the bright vision of the risen Sun,
But by a single witness scant were done :

Therefore that men might in the truth confide,
'Twas fit that evidence by numbers tried,
Should prove Him Risen Who was Crucified.

Ere yet the first bright Easter Day was spent,
Ten of the Brethren, with their hearts intent
On one absorbing thought, their footsteps bent

For mutual counsel to that Upper Room
Where Mass was offered first,—the destined womb
Whence light should spring to scatter sin's dark gloom.

That night the Apostles' College numbered Ten,
And on the octave-day thereafter, when
The Same with fastened doors were met again,

Thomas was present too, whose unbelief,
But that Christ's goodness melted him to grief,
Had wrought him shipwreck on doubt's fatal reef.

At last one hundred brethren, five times told,
The Presence of the Risen Christ behold,
And bold in faith themselves, make others bold!

Paul tells of these five hundred ; some, before,
Had passed away, but the surviving more
To Jesus' triumph, living witness bore.

Enough the proof for willing, honest hearts ;
God to good-will the grace of faith imparts,
But niggard doubt resists God's loving arts.

The veil of darkness that the Godhead wore
Is rent, and Jesus' virtue, hid no more
Reveals Itself, all pain and sadness o'er :

And He Who came the Temple's veil to rend,
And Heaven and earth, as Mediator, blend,
Consoles His loved ones as a friend his friend.

CANTO II.

OF THE ELEVENTH APPARITION.

God's Holy Spirit, as It listeth, blows ;
God shares His favours as He will : who knows
Why He the Younger James by preference chose

To be the only one among the Ten,
Witness apart, to see Christ risen again,
As He chose Peter and the Magdalene ?

Was it because the Younger James shall share
First in the Chief Apostle's world-wide care,—
Too vast a charge for one man's strength to bear ?

For Peter's charge, to no one spot confined,
(Both lambs and sheep to him, as chief, consigned)
Embraced in its wide circuit all mankind :

Henceforth, both sheep and lambs, thro' him made one,
The heavenward path in grace and truth begun,
Their trial-course on earth unerring run.

James was invested by Divine decree,
With charge of Salem's Patriarchal See,
Subject alone to Peter's Chair and Key :—

And for the honour of that pristine Chair,
'Twas his in Peter's privilege to share—
Christ Risen to see, no other witness there.

The veil of darkness that the Godhead wore
Is rent, and Jesus' virtue, hid no more,
Reveals Itself, all pain and sadness o'er:

And He Who came the Temple's veil to rend
And Heaven and earth, as Mediator, blend,
Consoles His loved ones as a friend his friend.

CANTO 12.

OF THE TWELFTH APPARITION.

Pleasure or honour, or the busy mart
Engaged the men of Jewry:—while apart,
One of their number, dear to Jesus' Heart,

With no man present else, received the grace
To gaze upon his Risen Master's Face,—
Answer His greeting and His Feet embrace.

Erewhile, when all the Apostles shrank afraid,
Joseph had Pilate fearlessly essayed,
And supplication for Christ's Body made:

Then in his own new Tomb, with reverence meet
Had laid, on aloes, myrrh and spices sweet,
That Sacred Body in Its Winding Sheet.

As women and Apostles witness bare
To Jesus risen, so did God's good care
A layman choose their privilege to share.

Then Joseph learned that he had wisely done
When he confessed in Jesus, God's own Son:
And wondered he had ever sought to shun

The open, bold, profession of belief
In Him Who, o'er the Angels Lord and Chief,
Was clothed in flesh to remedy man's grief.

When we, as Joseph, see Him face to face,
We shall in God our bygone history trace,
And blush for our remissness in the race.

Strange shall we feel it then that coward shame
Had made it hard to glory in His Name,—
The One from aye,—and now,—and aye, the Same!

Earth and earth's joys and sorrows come and go,
All things are brief and changeful here below;—
'Tis hard to think so now: then, we shall know.

The veil of darkness that the Godhead wore
Is rent, and Jesus' virtue hid no more
Reveals Itself, all pain and sadness o'er:

And He Who came the Temple's veil to rend,
And Heaven and earth, as Mediator, blend,
Consoles His loved ones as a friend his friend.

CANTO 13.

OF THE THIRTEENTH APPARITION.

Saul stands, consenting to Saint Stephen's death,—
The Proto-martyr, who with his last breath,
Enrapt, Christ's Resurrection witnesseth,—

"Lo! to my sight, the Court of Heaven displayed
Reveals the Son of Man, by men betrayed,
On God's Right Hand, all powerful to aid!"

As erst the adder with its venomed tooth
Bit the hard file, so Saul's hot-tempered youth
Assailed the followers of the Gospel truth:

Wild as a ravening wolf at break of day
He chased the Brethren of the hated Way,
Worried the sheep-fold and devoured the prey.

His goal, Damascus: for the good seed cast
By Evangelic labourers, had at last
The narrow bounds of Palestine o'erpassed,

Invading Syria: and Saul proudly thought
The crowd of Galileans that he brought
Captive in chains, would prove how he had sought

The Law of Moses to avenge right well,—
And little dreamed himself ere long would swell
The band whereon he now so wildly fell.

Yet so it fared! Damascus was in sight,
When from the heavens, than mid-day sun more bright,
There flashed upon the troop a blaze of light:

The dazzling stream and voice from Heaven confound
The retinue that compassed Saul around,
And Saul himself falls prostrate on the ground.

He saw the Lord: the Lord's remonstrant word,
"Why dost thou persecute Me, Saul?" he heard,
And (his whole soul with deep emotion stirred)

All humbly he replied: "Who, Lord, art Thou?"
He answered: "I am Jesus, Whom till now
Thou hast unkindly treated: thou shalt bow

"And do My Will." Then, lowly, Saul adored,
And earnestly to know that Will implored:
"Tell me what Thou wouldst have me do, O Lord!"

"A miracle shall prove thee, Saul, designed
To work My Glory: Lo! thou'rt stricken blind:
Go to Damascus, and thou there shalt find

"One Ananias. He, on the fourth morn
Shall give thee sight: by thee, once taught to scorn,
Through the wide world My witness shall be borne."

How changed the leader of that zealot band!
Led now on foot, submissive to the hand,
Behold him childlike for instruction stand,

A humble learner of the new-found lore
He had despised through ignorance before;—
Paul, Christ's Apostle now;—His foe no more.

The veil of darkness that the Godhead wore
Is rent, and Jesus' virtue, hid no more,
Reveals Itself, all pain and sadness o'er:

And He Who came the Temple's veil to rend,
And Heaven and earth, as Mediator, blend,
Consoles His loved ones as a friend his friend.

CANTO 14.

OF THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST OUR LORD.

It was the fortieth day, and at the board
The Eleven sat at meat: to them our Lord
Made Himself manifest. While He deplored

The want of faith in certain, who preferred
Their self-formed preconceptions, and demurred
To proofs by faithful witnesses averred,

He cleared their doubts away : and now, in turn,
When they with self-consuming zeal shall burn,
Their witness too ungracious souls will spurn.

He their high charge to His Apostles gave,—
To preach His Name,—the Risen from the grave ;—
And nerved their hearts the powers of Hell to brave.

"Go, bear," He said, "My Name throughout the world!
Go, with the Standard of the Cross unfurled ;
And from his seat let Lucifer be hurled !

"Unfaith, the faithless shall of hope bereave,
But they who hear your message and believe,
Shall, for reward, eternal life receive ;—

"Works of great wonder shall their footsteps press ;
They shall their hearers in strange tongues address ;
And chase the demons that men's souls possess.

"No plague, when they are nigh, shall cause alarm ;
The death-drugged cup to them shall work no harm,
Their touch the serpent, poison-barbed, shall charm.

"All now, by God's wise providence, hath sped
As in the Sacred Books hath aye been read ;—
As Moses, David, and the Prophets said.

"Now are the words of Holy Writ made plain,—
Thus it behoved the Christ to suffer pain,
Thus it behoved the Christ to rise again.

"Ye know My Teaching, go, and preach the same :
From Salem, through all lands and tongues, proclaim
Penance and absolution thro' My Name.

"I give you charge and right My Truth to teach ;
Should error or ill-will this right impeach,
God shall Himself with power confirm your speech.

"My Father's promise now no longer stayed,—
Ye, by the Holy Ghost, God's captains made,
Shall lead My hosts in Truth's Divine crusade."

He then the band of His disciples led,—
(They formed His train, He moving at their head)—
Forth to Bethania, where, to board and bed,

While still a servant's humble form He bore,
Kind friends had welcomed Him so oft before,—
Now ready to the Heavenly Court to soar.

One fond farewell :—His Mother saw Him rise—
She and His brethren, with strained, longing eyes
Follow His track, ascending to the skies.

The veil of darkness that the Godhead wore
Is rent, and now,—Its virtue, hid no more,
Christ is ascended : pain and death are o'er.

CANTO 15.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

Our God is Charity : would men but weigh
And ponder well this truth, 'twould be their stay,
Their guiding star through life, till life's last day.

Mark well, O Man, the blessings that from birth
God hath conferred upon thee : count their worth,—
They would the world encompass in their girth !

Say, hast thou ever in the noontide hour
Inhaled the freshness of the leafy bower?
Scented the perfume of a fragrant flower?

Does wholesome food thy frame in strength sustain?
Art free from hunger, thirst, disease and pain?
Dost reap the meed of toil in honest gain?

Does music or does song thine ear delight?
Do sacred fanes in their ethereal height,—
Does painting or does sculpture charm thy sight?

Dost thou attentive, Nature's course pursue?
Do earth and sea and sky entrance thy view?
Sunrise and sunset, with their changeful hue?

Whate'er the boon,—for body, mind, or heart,—
Science or pleasure, literature or art,
'Tis God's dear Love doth every gift impart!

E'en if thy life become acquaint with pain,
Thou wilt not God's Beneficence arraign,
For suffering is by patience turned to gain.

Pains here, pains due to bygone sins, atone:—
Pains here, pains due to venial faults, condone;—
Pains borne with Christ, sublimest virtue own.

And if there are whose life may seem a wreck,
Shattered with grief: yet, life is but a speck,—
The outset of a line, which, free from check,

By death unhindered, shall outrun time's lease,
And it shall prove that sorrows, when they cease,
Future rewards a thousand-fold increase.

So weal and woe are, equally, God's gift,—
Blessing intended, through their owner's thrift
To beatific joys men's souls to lift.

Use then God's various gifts with care discreet,
And let thy thankfulness, like incense sweet,
Rise in a cloud of fragrance to His Feet.

"Take all my freedom, Lord! If I bear ill
The sacrifice of all, yet, take it still,
My memory, my intellect, my whole will:

"Thou gavest all, and all I have is Thine;—
I all to Thee,—to all Thy Will resign:
Give me Thy Love and Grace, and all is mine."

See next how God, our Lord, in wondrous ways,
Knows how the value of His gifts to raise
Above all creatures' gifts in worth and praise.

When friend with friend a parting pledge hath left,
Donor and gift, like severed warp and weft,
Thenceforth by distance are of union reft;—

Not so with God:—His ever-present care
All things pervades,—fire, ocean, earth and air;—
And 'tis His Presence gives the form they wear.

E'en lifeless things His Presence never leaves:
His Presence for each one its nature weaves,
Each one its character from Him receives.

His Presence in the plant a life bestows
Whereby to stalwart oak the acorn grows,
And fairest colours blossom in the rose:

His Presence in the cattle, barred of speech,
Imparts sensation, giving power to each
The outward properties of things to reach:

His Presence in the sons of men hath wrought
An Image of Himself with speech and thought,
And so to know his Maker, man is brought.

Then by a special Presence, fruit of Grace,
God in those favoured souls that seek His Face,
His supernatural likeness loves to trace.

For, then, the blessings which thy pathway strew
From morning grey to evening's darkling blue,
Give thanks to God with loyal heart and true.

"Take all my freedom, Lord! if I bear ill
The sacrifice of all, yet, take it still,
My memory, my intellect, my whole will:

"Thou gavest all, and all I have is Thine;—
I all to Thee,—to all Thy Will resign:
Give me Thy Love and Grace, and all is mine."

Nor in His Gifts doth God inactive dwell,
In His Concurrence lies the secret spell
Wherewith we good pursue, or evil quell.

E'en as the labouring man from morn till eve
Works, and his toils his household's wants relieve,
God works in all the gifts that men receive:

Food gives us strength our daily task to meet;
The fount refreshes us in summer's heat;—
'Tis God sustains us when we drink or eat.

The dazzling sun illumes us through the day;—
The moon at night forbids our feet to stray;—
Both, serving man, God's Agency obey!

The father trains his child, by filial fear,—
The mother spends herself, her babe to rear;—
God is our Father and our Mother dear!

And so, in all by creatures planned and done,
'Tis God's Concurrence aids the act begun,
And were It wanting, action there were none.

Therefore, again, confess Him Good and Wise
In all the causes and effects you prize,
And praise Him for the help His Love supplies.

"Take all my freedom, Lord! If I bear ill
The sacrifice of all, yet, take it still,
My memory, my intellect, my whole will:

"Thou gavest all, and all I have is Thine;—
I all to Thee, to all Thy Will resign:
Give me Thy Love and Grace, and all is mine."

So God each gift on thee, O man, bestows,—
Each gift its goodness to His Presence owes,—
The good each does from His Concurrence flows;—

He cares for thee as for an only son,
As though, for thy sake only, all were done,—
Now let thy glance o'er all creation run:

What hath been said of thee is true of all;—
Of all God's creatures, be they great or small,—
Of matter formed or free from matter's thrall.

'Tis He provides for all, e'en as for thee,—
Without His Presence none of them could be,—
None energise in whatsoe'er degree.

Be then His Mercy aye His Creatures' theme;—
From Him, as from the Fountain-head supreme,
Blessings flow down on all in ceaseless stream.

He is the Fountain whence all streams arise:—
The Sun, that giveth light to countless eyes:—
Prime Source of all that's strong and good and wise.

Therefore once more, in rapturous delight,
Raise thy glad voice and glorify His Might,
His tender Love, His Wisdom's boundless height.

"Take all my freedom, Lord! If I bear ill
The sacrifice of all, yet, take it still,
My memory, my intellect, my whole will:

"Thou gavest all, and all I have is Thine;—
I all to Thee, to all Thy Will resign:
Give me Thy Love and Grace, and all is mine.'

L.D.S.

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